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A STRANGE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MY NOVEL," "RIENZI," &c.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

I WALKED on slowly and with the downcast head of a man absorbed in meditation. I had gained the broad place in which the main streets of the town converged, when I was overtaken by a violent storm of rain. I sought shelter under the dark archway of that entrance to the district of Abbey Hill which was still called Monk-gate. The shadow within the arch was so deep that I was not aware that I had a companion till I heard my own name, close at my side. I recognised the voice before I could distinguish the form of Sir Philip Derval.

"The storm will be soon over," said he, quietly. "I saw it coming on in time. I fear you neglected the first warning of those sable clouds, and must be already drenched."

I made no reply, but moved involuntarily away towards the mouth of the arch.

"I see that you cherish a grudge against me!" resumed Sir Philip. "Are you, then, by nature vindictive?"

Somewhat softened by the friendly tone of this reproach, I answered, half in jest, half in earnest,

"You must own, Sir Philip, that I have some little reason for the uncharitable anger your question imputes to me. But I can forgive you on one condition."

"What is that?"

"The possession, for half an hour, of that mysterious steel casket which you carry about with you, and full permission to analyse and test its contents."

"Your analysis of the contents," returned Sir Philip, dryly, "would leave you as ignorant as before of the uses to which they can be applied. But I will own to you frankly, that it is my intention to select some confidant among men of science, to whom I may safely communicate the wonderful properties which certain essences in that casket possess. I invite your acquaintance, nay, your friendship, in the hope that I may find such a confidant in you. But the casket contains other combinations, which, if wasted, could not be re-supplied; at least, by any process which the great Master from whom I received them

placed within reach of my knowledge. In this they resemble the diamond; when the chemist has found that the diamond affords no other substance by its combustion than pure carbonic acid gas, and that the only chemical difference between the costliest diamond, and a lump of pure charcoal, is a porportion of hydrogen, less than ~~two~~ part of the weight of the substance—can the chemist make you a diamond?

"These, then, the more potent, but also the more perilous of the casket's contents, shall be explored by no science, submitted to no test. They are the keys to masked doors in the ramparts of Nature, which no mortal can pass through without rousing dread sentries never seen upon this side her wall. The powers they confer are secrets locked in my breast, to be lost in my grave; as the casket which lies on my breast shall not be transferred to the hands of another, till all the rest of my earthly possessions pass away with my last breath in life, and my first in eternity."

"Sir Philip Derval," said I, struggling against the appeals to fancy or to awe, made in words so strange, uttered in a tone of earnest conviction, and heard amidst the glare of the lightning, the howl of the winds, and the roll of the thunder—"Sir Philip Derval, you accost me in language which, but for my experience of the powers at your command, I should hear with the contempt that is due to the vaunts of a mountebank, or the pity we give to the morbid beliefs of his dupe. As it is, I decline the confidence with which you would favour me, subject to the conditions which it seems you would impose. My profession abandons to quacks all drugs which may not be analysed; all secrets which may not be fearlessly told. I cannot visit you at Derval Court. I cannot trust myself, voluntarily, again in the power of a man, who has arts of which I may not examine the nature, by which he can impose on my imagination and steal away my reason."

"Reflect well, before you so decide," said Sir Philip, with a solemnity that was stern. "If you refuse to be warned and to be armed by me, your reason and your imagination will alike be subjected to influences which I can only explain by telling you that there is truth in those immemorial legends which depose to the existence of magic."

"Magic!"

"There is magic of two kinds—the dark and evil, appertaining to witchcraft or necromancy; the pure and beneficent, which is but philosophy, applied to certain mysteries in Nature remote from the beaten tracks of science, but, which deepened the wisdom of ancient sages, and can yet unriddle the myths of departed races."

"Sir Philip," I said, with impatient and angry interruption, "if you think that a jargon of this kind be worthy a man of your acquirements and station, it is at least a waste of time to address it to me. I am led to conclude that you desire to make use of me for some purpose which I have a right to suppose honest and upright, because all you know of me is, that I rendered to your relation services which cannot lower my character in your eyes. If your object be, as you have intimated, to aid you in exposing and disabling a man whose antecedents have been those of guilt, and who threatens with danger the society which receives him, you must give me proofs that are not reducible to magic; and you must prepossess me against the person you accuse, not by powders and fumes that disorder the brain, but by substantial statements, such as justify one man in condemning another. And, since you have thought fit to convince me that there are chemical means at your disposal, by which the imagination can be so affected as to accept, temporarily, illusions for realities, so I again demand, and now still more decidedly than before, that while you address yourself to my reason, whether to explain your object or to vindicate your charges against a man whom I have admitted to my acquaintance, you will divest yourself of all means and agencies to warp my judgment, so illicit and fraudulent as those which you own yourself to possess. Let the casket, with all its contents, be transferred to my hands, and pledge me your word that, in giving that casket, you reserve to yourself no other means by which chemistry can be abused to those influences over physical organisation, which ignorance or imposture may ascribe to—magic."

"I accept no conditions for my confidence, though I think the better of you for attempting to make them. If I live, you will seek me yourself, and implore my aid. Meanwhile, listen to me, and—"

"No; I prefer the rain and the thunder to the whispers that steal to my ear in the dark from one of whom I have reason to beware."

So saying, I stepped forth, and at that moment the lightning flashed through the arch, and brought into full view the face of the man beside me. Seen by that glare, it was pale as the face of a corpse, but its expression was compassionate and serene.

I hesitated, for the expression of that hueless countenance touched me; it was not the face which inspires distrust or fear.

"Come," said I, gently; "grant my demand. The casket—"

"It is no scruple of distrust that now makes that demand; it is a curiosity which in itself is a

fearful tempter. Did you now possess what at this moment you desire, how bitterly you would repent."

"Do you still refuse my demand?"

"I refuse."

"If then you really need me, it is you who will repent."

I passed from the arch into the open space. The rain had paused, the thunder was more distant. I looked back when I had gained the opposite side of the way, at the angle of a street which led to my own house. As I did so, again the skies lightened, but the flash was comparatively slight and evanescent; it did not penetrate the gloom of the arch; it did not bring the form of Sir Philip into view; but, just under the base of the outer buttress to the gateway, I descried the outline of a dark figure, cowering down, huddled up for shelter, the outline so indistinct and so soon lost to sight, as the flash faded, that I could not distinguish if it were man or brute. If it were some chance passer-by, who had sought refuge from the rain, and overheard any part of our strange talk, "the listener," thought I, with a half smile, "must have been mightily perplexed."

CHAPTER XXXV.

ON reaching my own home, I found my servant sitting up for me with the information that my attendance was immediately required. The little boy whom Margrave's carelessness had so injured, and for whose injury he had shown so little feeling, had been weakened by the confinement which the nature of the injury required, and for the last few days had been generally ailing. The father had come to my house a few minutes before I reached it, in great distress of mind, saying that his child had been seized with fever; and had become delirious. Hearing that I was at the mayor's house, he had hurried thither in search of me.

I felt as if it were almost a relief to the troubled and haunting thoughts which tormented me, to be summoned to the exercise of a familiar knowledge. I hastened to the bedside of the little sufferer, and soon forgot all else in the anxious struggle for a human life. The struggle promised to be successful; the worst symptoms began to yield to remedies prompt and energetic, if simple. I remained at the house, rather to comfort and support the parents, than because my continued attendance was absolutely needed, till the night was well-nigh gone, and, all cause of immediate danger having subsided, I then found myself once more in the streets. An atmosphere palely clear in the grey of dawn had succeeded to the thunder-clouds of the stormy night; the street-lamps, here and there, burned wan and still. I was walking slowly and wearily, so tired out that I was scarcely conscious of my own thoughts, when in a narrow lane, my feet stopped almost mechanically before a human form stretched at full length in the centre of the road, right in my path. The form was dark in the shadow thrown from the neighbouring houses. "Some poor drunkard," thought I, and the humanity inseparable from my

calling not allowing me to leave a fellow-creature thus exposed to the risk of being run over by the first drowsy waggoner who might pass along the thoroughfare, I stooped to rouse and to lift the form. What was my horror when my eyes met the rigid stare of a dead man's. I started, looked again; it was the face of Sir Philip Derval! He was lying on his back, the countenance upturned, a dark stream oozing from the breast—murdered, by two ghastly wounds—murdered not long since; the blood was still warm. Stunned and terror-stricken, I stood bending over the body. Suddenly I was touched on the shoulder.

"Hollo! what is this?" said a gruff voice.

"Murder!" I answered, in hollow accents, which sounded strangely to my own ear.

"Murder! so it seems." And the policeman who had thus accosted me lifted the body.

"A gentleman, by his dress. How did this happen? How did you come here?" and the policeman glanced suspiciously at me.

At this moment, however, there came up another policeman, in whom I recognised the young man whose sister I had attended and cured.

"Dr. Fenwick," said the last, lifting his hat respectfully, and at the sound of my name his fellow-policeman changed his manner, and muttered an apology.

I now collected myself sufficiently to state the name and rank of the murdered man. The policemen bore the body to their station, to which I accompanied them. I then returned to my own house, and had scarcely sunk on my bed, when sleep came over me. But what a sleep! Never till then had I known how awfully distinct dreams can be. The phantasmagoria of the naturalist's collection revived. Life again awoke in the serpent and the tiger, the scorpion moved, and the vulture flapped its wings. And there was Margrave and there Sir Philip; but their position of power was reversed. And Margrave's foot was on the breast of the dead man. Still I slept on till I was roused by the summons to attend on Mr. Vigors, the magistrate, to whom the police had reported the murder.

I dressed hastily and went forth. As I passed through the street, I found that the dismal news had already spread. I was accosted on my way to the magistrate by a hundred eager, tremulous, inquiring tongues.

The scanty evidence I could impart was soon given. My introduction to Sir Philip at the mayor's house, our accidental meeting under the arch, my discovery of the corpse some hours afterwards on my return from my patient, my professional belief that the deed must have been done a very short time, perhaps but a few minutes, before I had chanced upon its victim. But, in that case, how account for the long interval that had elapsed between the time in which I had left Sir Philip under the arch, and the time in which the murder must have been committed? Sir Philip could not have been wandering through the streets all those hours. This doubt, how-

ever, was easily and speedily cleared up. A Mr. Jeeves, who was one of the principal solicitors in the town, stated that he had acted as Sir Philip's legal agent and adviser ever since Sir Philip came of age, and was charged with the exclusive management of some valuable house property which the deceased had possessed in L—; that when Sir Philip had arrived in the town late in the afternoon of the previous day, he had sent for Mr. Jeeves; informed him that he, Sir Philip, was engaged to be married; that he desired to have full and minute information as to the details of his house property (which had greatly increased in value since his absence from England), in connexion with the settlements his marriage would render necessary; and that this information was also required by him in respect to a codicil he desired to add to his will.

He had, accordingly, requested Mr. Jeeves to have all the books and statements concerning the property ready for his inspection that night, when he would call, after leaving the ball which he had promised the mayor, whom he had accidentally met on entering the town, to attend. Sir Philip had also asked Mr. Jeeves to detain one of his clerks in his office, in order to serve conjointly with Mr. Jeeves as a witness to the codicil he desired to add to his will. Sir Philip had accordingly come to Mr. Jeeves's house a little before midnight; had gone carefully through all the statements prepared for him, and had executed the fresh codicil to his testament, which testament he had in their previous interview given to Mr. Jeeves's care, sealed up. Mr. Jeeves stated that Sir Philip, though a man of remarkable talents and great acquirements, was extremely eccentric, and of a very peremptory temper, and that the importance attached to a promptitude for which there seemed no pressing occasion, did not surprise him in Sir Philip as it might have done in an ordinary client. Sir Philip said, indeed, that he should devote the next morning to the draft for his wedding settlements, according to the information of his property which he had acquired; and after a visit of very brief duration to Derval Court, should quit the neighbourhood and return to Paris, where his intended bride then was, and in which city it had been settled that the marriage ceremony should take place.

Mr. Jeeves had, however, observed to him, that if he were so soon to be married it was better to postpone any revision of testamentary bequests, since after marriage he would have to make a new will altogether.

And Sir Philip had simply answered,

"Life is uncertain; who can be sure of the morrow?"

Sir Philip's visit to Mr. Jeeves's house had lasted some hours, for the conversation between them had branched off from actual business to various topics. Mr. Jeeves had not noticed the hour when Sir Philip went; he could only say that as he attended him to the street door, he observed, rather to his own surprise, that it was close upon daybreak.

Sir Philip's body had been found not many yards distant from the hotel at which he had put up, and to which, therefore, he was evidently returning when he left Mr. Jeeves. An old-fashioned hotel, which had been the principal one at L— when Sir Philip left England, though now outtrivalled by the new and more central establishment, in which Margrave was domiciled.

The primary and natural supposition was, that Sir Philip had been murdered for the sake of plunder; and this supposition was borne out by the fact to which his valet deposed: viz.

That Sir Philip had about his person, on going to the mayor's house, a purse containing notes and sovereigns; and this purse was now missing.

The valet, who, though an Albanian, spoke English fluently, said that the purse had a gold clasp, on which Sir Philip's crest and initials were engraved. Sir Philip's watch was, however, untaken.

And, now, it was not without a quick beat of the heart, that I heard the valet declare that a steel casket, to which Sir Philip attached extraordinary value, and always carried about with him, was also missing.

The Albanian described this casket as of ancient Byzantine workmanship, opening with a peculiar spring, only known to Sir Philip, in whose possession it had been, so far as the servant knew, about three years; when, after a visit to Aleppo, in which the servant had not accompanied him, he had first observed it in his master's hands. He was asked if this casket contained articles to account for the value Sir Philip set on it—such as jewels, bank-notes, letters of credit, &c. The man replied that it might possibly do so; he had never been allowed the opportunity of examining its contents; but that he was certain the casket held medicines, for he had seen Sir Philip take from it some small phials, by which he had performed great cures in the East, and especially during a pestilence which had visited Damascus, just after Sir Philip had arrived at that city on quitting Aleppo. Almost every European traveller is supposed to be a physician; and Sir Philip was a man of great benevolence, and the servant firmly believed him also to be of great medical skill. After this statement, it was very naturally and generally conjectured that Sir Philip was an amateur disciple of homœopathy, and that the casket contained the phials or globules in use among homœopaths.

Whether or not Mr. Vigors enjoyed a vindictive triumph in making me feel the weight of his authority, or whether his temper was ruffled in the excitement of so grave a case, I cannot say, but his manner was stern and his tone discourteous in the questions which he addressed to me. Nor did the questions themselves seem very pertinent to the object of investigation.

"Pray, Dr. Fenwick," said he, knitting his brows, and fixing his eyes on me rudely, "did

Sir Philip Derval, in his conversation with you, mention the steel casket which it seems he carried about with him?"

I felt my countenance change slightly as I answered, "Yes."

"Did he tell you what it contained?"

"He said it contained secrets."

"Secrets of what nature, medicinal or chemical? Secrets which a physician might be curious to learn and covetous to possess?"

This question seemed to me so offensively significant that it roused my indignation, and I answered haughtily, that "a physician of any degree of merited reputation did not much believe in, and still less covet, those secrets in his art which were the boast of quacks and pretenders."

"My question need not offend you, Dr. Fenwick. I put it in another shape. Did Sir Philip Derval so boast of the secrets contained in his casket, that a quack or pretender might deem such secrets of use to him?"

"Possibly he might, if he believed in such a boast."

"Humph—he might if he so believed. I have no more questions to put to you, at present, Dr. Fenwick."

Little of any importance in connexion with the deceased, or his murder, transpired in the course of that day's examination and inquiries.

The next day, a gentleman, distantly related to the young lady to whom Sir Philip was engaged, and who had been for some time in correspondence with the deceased, arrived at L—. He had been sent for at the suggestion of the Albanian servant, who said that Sir Philip had stayed a day at this gentleman's house in London, on his way to L—, from Dover.

The new comer, whose name was Danvers, gave a more touching pathos to the horror which the murder had excited. It seemed that the motives which had swayed Sir Philip in the choice of his betrothed, were singularly pure and noble. The young lady's father—an intimate college friend—had been visited by a sudden reverse of fortune, which had brought on a fever that proved mortal. He had died some years ago, leaving his only child penniless, and had bequeathed her to the care and guardianship of Sir Philip.

The orphan received her education at a convent near Paris; and when Sir Philip, a few weeks since, arrived in that city from the East, he offered her his hand and fortune. "I know," said Mr. Danvers, "from the conversation I held with him when he came to me in London, that he was induced to this offer by the conscientious desire to discharge the trust consigned to him by his old friend. Sir Philip was still too young to take under his own roof a female ward of eighteen, without injury to her good name. He could only get over that difficulty by making the ward his wife. 'She will be safer and happier with the man she will love and honour for her father's sake,' said the chivalrous gentle-

man, 'than she will be under any other roof I could find for her.'"

And now there arrived another stranger to L—, sent for by Mr. Jeeves, the lawyer;—a stranger to L—, but not to me; my old Edinburgh acquaintance, Richard Strahan.

The will in Mr. Jeeves's keeping, with its recent codicil, was opened and read. The will itself bore date about six years anterior to the testator's tragic death: it was very short, and, with the exception of a few legacies, of which the most important was ten thousand pounds to his ward, the whole of his property was left to Richard Strahan, on the condition that he took the name and arms of Derval within a year from the date of Sir Philip's decease. The codicil, added to the will the night before his death, increased the legacy to the young lady from ten to thirty thousand pounds, and bequeathed an annuity of one hundred pounds a year to his Albanian servant. Accompanying the will, and within the same envelope, was a sealed letter, addressed to Richard Strahan, and dated at Paris two weeks before Sir Philip's decease. Strahan brought that letter to me. It ran thus: "Richard Strahan, I advise you to pull down the house called Derval Court, and to build another on a better site, the plans of which, to be modified according to your own taste and requirements, will be found among my papers. This is a recommendation, not a command. But I strictly enjoin you entirely to demolish the more ancient part, which was chiefly occupied by myself, and to destroy by fire, without perusal, all the books and manuscripts found in the safes in my study. I have appointed you my sole executor, as well as my heir, because I have no personal friends in whom I can confide as I trust I may do in the man I have never seen, simply because he will bear my name and represent my lineage. There will be found in my writing-desk, which always accompanies me in my travels, an autobiographical work, a record of my own life, comprising discoveries, or hints at discovery, in science, through means little cultivated in our age. You will not be surprised that before selecting you as my heir and executor, from a crowd of relations not more distant, I should have made inquiries in order to justify my selection. The result of those inquiries informs me that you have not yourself the peculiar knowledge nor the habits of mind that could enable you to judge of matters which demand the attainments and the practice of science; but that you are of an honest affectionate nature, and will regard as sacred the last injunctions of a benefactor. I enjoin you, then, to submit the aforesaid manuscript memoir to some man on whose character for humanity and honour you can place confidential reliance, and who is accustomed to the study of the positive sciences, more especially chemistry, in connexion with electricity and magnetism. My desire is that he shall edit and arrange this memoir for publication; and that, wherever he feels a conscientious

doubt whether any discovery, or hint of discovery, therein contained, would not prove more dangerous than useful to mankind, he shall consult with any other three men of science whose names are a guarantee for probity and knowledge, and according to the best of his judgment, after such consultation, suppress or publish the passage of which he has so doubted. I own the ambition which first directed me towards studies of a very unusual character, and which has encouraged me in their pursuit through many years of voluntary exile, in lands where they could be best facilitated or aided—the ambition of leaving behind me the renown of a bold discoverer in those recesses of nature which philosophy has hitherto abandoned to superstition. But I feel, at the moment in which I trace these lines, a fear lest, in the absorbing interest of researches which tend to increase to a marvellous degree the power of man over all matter, animate or inanimate, I may have blunted my own moral perceptions; and that there may be much in the knowledge which I sought and acquired from the pure desire of investigating hidden truths, that could be more abused to purposes of tremendous evil than be likely to conduce to benignant good. And of this a mind disciplined to severe reasoning, and uninfluenced by the enthusiasm which has probably obscured my own judgment, should be the unprejudiced arbiter. Much as I have coveted and still do covet that fame which makes the memory of one man the common inheritance of all, I would infinitely rather that my name should pass away with my breath, than that I should transmit to my fellow-men any portion of a knowledge which the good might forbear to exercise and the bad might unscrupulously pervert. I bear about with me, wherever I wander, a certain steel casket. I received this casket with its contents from a man whose memory I hold in profound veneration. Should I live to find a person whom, after minute and intimate trial of his character, I should deem worthy of such confidence, it is my intention to communicate to him the secret how to prepare and how to use such of the powders and essences stored within that casket as I myself have ventured to employ. Others I have never tested, nor do I know how they could be re-supplied if lost or wasted. But as the contents of this casket, in the hands of any one not duly instructed as to the mode of applying them, would either be useless, or conduce, through inadvertent and ignorant misapplication, to the most dangerous consequences; so, if I die without having found, and in writing named, such a confidant as I have described above, I command you immediately to empty all the powders and essences found therein into any running stream of water, which will at once harmlessly dissolve them. On no account must they be cast into fire!

"This letter, Richard Strahan, will only come under your eyes in case the plans and the hopes which I have formed for my earthly future should be frustrated by the death on which I do not

calculate, but against the chances of which this will and this letter provide. I am about to re-visit England, in defiance of a warning that I shall be there subjected to some peril which I refuse to have defined, because I am unwilling that any mean apprehension of personal danger should enfeeble my nerves in the discharge of a stern and solemn duty. If I overcome that peril, you will not be my heir; my testament will be remodelled; this letter will be recalled and destroyed. I shall form ties which promise me the happiness I have never hitherto found, though it is common to all men—the affections of home, the caresses of children, among whom I may find one to whom hereafter I may bequeath, in my knowledge, a far nobler heritage than my lands. In that case, however, my first care would be to assure your own fortunes. And the sum which this codicil assures to my betrothed, would be transferred to yourself on my wedding-day. Do you know why, never having seen you, I thus select you for preference to all my other kindred? Why my heart, in writing thus, warms to your image? Richard Strahan, your only sister, many years older than yourself—you were then a child—was the object of my first love. We were to have been wedded, for her parents deceived me into the belief that she returned my affection. With a rare and noble candour, she herself informed me, that her heart was given to another, who possessed not my worldly gifts of wealth and station. In resigning my claims to her hand, I succeeded in propitiating her parents to her own choice. I obtained for her husband the living which he held, and I settled on your sister the dower which at her death passed to you as the brother to whom she had shown a mother's love, and the interest of which has secured you a modest independence.

"If these lines ever reach you, recognise my title to reverential obedience to commands which may seem to you wild, perhaps irrational; and repay, as if a debt due from your own lost sister, the affection I have borne to you for her sake."

While I read this long and strange letter, Strahan sat by my side, covering his face with his hands and weeping with honest tears for the man whose death had made him powerful and rich.

"You will undertake the trust ordained to me in this letter," said he, struggling to compose himself. "You will read and edit this memoir; you are the very man he himself would have selected. Of your honour and humanity there can be no doubt, and you have studied with success the sciences which he specifies as requisite for the discharge of the task he commands."

At this request, though I could not be wholly unprepared for it, my first impulse was that of a vague terror. It seemed to me as if I were becoming more and more entangled in a mysterious and fatal web. But this impulse soon faded in the eager yearnings of an ardent and irresistible curiosity.

I promised to read the manuscript, and in order that I might fully imbue my mind with the object and wish of the deceased, I asked leave to make a copy of the letter I had just read. To this Strahan readily assented, and that copy I have transcribed in the preceding pages.

I asked Strahan if he had yet found the manuscript; he said, "No, he had not yet had the heart to inspect the papers left by the deceased. He would now do so. He should go in a day or two to Derval Court, and reside there till the murderer was discovered, as, doubtless, he soon must be through the vigilance of the police. Not till that discovery was made should Sir Philip's remains, though already placed in their coffin, be consigned to the family vault."

Strahan seemed to have some superstitious notion that the murderer might be more secure from justice if his victim were thrust, unavenged, into the tomb.

LONDON WATER.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

THE New River project in 1607 was, without doubt, a most hazardous speculation; a scheme largely forced upon the town in advance of the fair commercial demand, by a man of great self-reliance, plausibility, and energy. It was a scheme which the London corporation of the time—a body not at all wanting in public spirit then—refused to carry out, although they had obtained several acts of parliament to enable them, if they thought proper, to bring water into the City from Hertfordshire. Although the enterprise eventually succeeded, and grew gradually, century after century, into one of the most lucrative of joint-stock undertakings, its commercial character from 1608 up to 1633 is shown to be faulty, from the fact that it paid no dividend for twenty years. The ground it gained afterwards, up to and after the abolition of the conduits in 1728, has been a source of wealth and comfort to the shareholders; but the breakdown of Master Hugh Myddelton's golden calculations is hardly concealed by this after success. He was opposed before he undertook the work; he was opposed during its progress; and he was doubtless taunted for years about his unsatisfactory balance-sheets. He retained a sufficient interest in the concern during its financial struggles to make him comparatively wealthy when the turn in affairs arrived—most probably because no one would come forward to purchase his shares. With singular inconsistency, his memory is cherished by many as that of a great public benefactor, while the existing water companies in general, and his legal representatives in particular, are daily and hourly abused. There is nothing in the dim fragments of his history to prove that he was particularly disinterested in his dealings, or that, beyond painting his enterprise in colours a little too glaring, he carried on his business upon sentimental principles. If Sir Hugh Myddelton, Bart., were really regarded by his contemporaries as it is the fashion to regard him now, it is strange that no one ever stepped

forward to write his biography. Before he turned a sod of his new water channel, he obtained a strictly legal conveyance from the London corporation, of all authority vested in them under their several acts of parliament concerning the water supply. In his dealings with water consumers, after his works were finished, and he was established with his partners as a water-seller, he showed no particular sentimental liberality. His bills, no doubt, were punctually delivered; and payment was promptly demanded, on a scale—to judge by specimens preserved in local records—which showed him anxious to get as much money for as little water as possible. In 1616, he granted a lease for twenty-one years to a citizen and his wife of “a pipe or quill of half an inch bore, for the service of their yard and kitchen, by means of tooe of the smallest swan-necked cockes, in consideration of the yearly sum of twenty-six shillings and eight-pence.” The water then was accused of being muddy, and several rival schemes were put forward by rival speculators.

The work he had to do, and the difficulties he had to surmount, were, no doubt, enormous, and we may give him credit for the skill, industry, and perseverance he displayed, without investing him with imaginary qualities. He had to contend against the opposition of certain landed proprietors through whose grounds he wished to cut his channel, and against mechanical obstacles which the slender engineering skill of the time scarcely knew how to overcome. This is how the New River came to have its chief beauty—its winding course. He had to petition the corporation for an extension of the time granted him to complete the undertaking; and this being conceded, he brought the water from the springs of Chadwell and Amwell in Hertfordshire as far as Enfield, when he discovered that his funds were exhausted. He again applied to the corporation—this time to induce them to take a pecuniary interest in the concern, or to grant him a loan. Both requests were refused, on account of the great cost of the enterprise, and the uncertainty of its profitable results. In his extremity, he applied to King James the First, and succeeded in inducing him to take a half-share in the business, upon condition that the king should pay all the cost of that portion of the work which then remained unexecuted. The firm from that hour became practically Myddelton and James; and they opened as dealers in water, when the New River entered the reservoir now called the New River Head, in the parish of Clerkenwell, with much music and rejoicing, feasting, processions, and reciting of poems, on the 29th of September, 1613.

Thus was finished one of the most beautiful of artificial rivers; a winding channel forty-eight miles in length, thirty feet deep in many places, spanned by some eight hundred arches in stone and wood, which had employed six hundred men for more than five years. It was disposed of in underground pipes of lead and wood, “serving the highest parts of London in

their lower rooms, and lower parts of London in their higher rooms.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE New River—as the whole works are still popularly called—is no more like it was, than the fancy portrait of Master Hugh Myddelton's character is probably like the original.* One of the ancient springs—the old Amwell spring—has entirely disappeared, having oozed away silently, about 1830, into the bed of the river Lea. The Chadwell spring, that mysterious, circular, chalky pool, in the Hertfordshire valley, which has been the drinking-fountain for centuries of countless thirsty millions, no longer gives forth drink with its accustomed liberality. Springs, like men, must be allowed to grow weary with work and old age, and must submit to see younger followers rising up to supply their place. The old river channel, winding between flowers and grassy slopes, dipping under roadways, flowing past cottages, churchyards, and country taverns, has had its loops cut off, at different times, until its length has been reduced to something like twenty-eight miles, and it now only counts as one reservoir amongst many. Even the royal partnership was dissolved by Charles the First, who re-granted to Sir Hugh Myddelton, then a baronet, the half-share in the undertaking, in consideration of an annual payment into the Exchequer of five hundred pounds. At this time the chartered enterprise was at very low-water mark, and the act of “royal bounty” may have been a prudent and selfish act, produced by an application—or “call”—on the part of Sir Hugh for more money. The seventy-two parts into which the property is now divided, are still counted as thirty-six “adventurers’,” and thirty-six “king’s” shares, and the royal annuity is still paid out of the profits apportioned to the latter. It is a curious fact that Hugh precluded James from taking any part in the management of the company, although he allowed a person to be present at the meetings, to prevent injustice to his royal principal. This preclusion still extends to the holders of the royal shares. Probably the great water-company projector had no faith in the business talents of kings; or he may have thought that majesty on board days would have shown itself a little too radiant “in the chair.”

The original cost of the undertaking has to be guessed, because all the documents of the company were destroyed by a fire at their office in Dorset-street, Fleet-street, in 1769. These guesses have varied from five hundred thousand to one hundred thousand pounds sterling; an estimate of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds being, perhaps, nearest to the mark.

The New River Company still holds the first place in the present water system of London. Its sources of supply are the old Chadwell spring, before alluded to; four Artesian wells

* Mr. Samuel Smiles is preparing an elaborate biography of Sir Hugh, the materials of which have been gathered from unpublished documents. It will probably enlighten the public on this last matter.

sunk at Amwell, Cheshunt, Hampstead-road, and Hampstead Heath; the Cheshunt reservoirs; seven ponds at Highgate; and seven ponds at Hampstead; from which an unfiltered supply is drawn by a separate system of mains for street watering and like purposes; and the river Lea at Hertford, which now feeds it with the greatest proportion of the water it conveys through London. Its reservoirs, to maintain a stock in hand, are very large and numerous. There are the store and settling reservoirs, consisting of the old river channel, twenty-eight miles long, and perhaps about five yards broad, which has a capacity to store about one hundred and seventeen millions of gallons, or about a day's supply for all London; two reservoirs at Cheshunt, which can store about seventy-five and a half millions of gallons; another reservoir at Hornsey, capable of holding thirty-nine millions of gallons; two more at Stoke Newington, formed in 1833, capable of holding one hundred and thirty millions of gallons; and the ancient "round pond"—the one original reservoir—at the New River Head, which contains at least two millions one hundred and sixty-two thousand gallons.

The reservoirs at Stoke Newington are like two vast inland lakes, and their stone-piled borders look like a rocky sea-shore. The engine-house is built to resemble a fortress, and the water, instead of being pumped up pipes that are like gigantic upright trombones, to reach an artificial level, and so supply a point several hundred feet higher than the reservoirs, is forced by the most fearful Cornish engines ever made, up into a turret of a watch-tower. Everything has been done to make the artificial look as picturesque as possible; but still the old river channel at the side, with its grassy banks, its overhanging willows, its patient anglers, and the accumulated sentiment of two centuries and a half, is the stream that flows the most readily into our hearts. There is as much difference between the two, as between an ancient footway across the fields, worn into breadth and distinctness by the footsteps of generation after generation, and a new, straight thoroughfare, plastered on each side with stucco, full of right angles, and stamped at every corner with traces of the compass and the rule.

The New River Company, which now includes the old London-bridge Water Company and the older Hampstead Water Company, has eight more store reservoirs for filtered water at different parts of its works, capable of storing about twenty-three and a half millions of gallons. All these reservoirs are covered, with the exception of one at Hornsey, which is exempted on account of its distance from town. The company has eleven filtering beds—three at Hornsey, five at Stoke Newington, and three at the New River Head—possessing a joint sand area of nine and a half acres, and capable of storing eleven millions one hundred and sixty-three thousand gallons. The filtering medium is five feet in thickness, two of which consist of sand, and the rest of gravel in layers increasing in

coarseness towards the bottom. Besides these store chambers, it has further storage for water supplied for purposes not requiring filtration, in ponds, before alluded to, at Hampstead and Highgate, which hold about sixty-seven millions of gallons, and one reservoir at Camden-square which holds about two millions of gallons. Summed up roughly, this storage amounts to forty-one reservoirs, counting the river channel as one, having together an area of two hundred and fifteen acres, and holding four hundred and sixty-seven millions of gallons, or water equal to supply the company's district for eighteen days.

There are ten engine stations at different points of the works, having eighteen engines, possessing together about sixteen hundred horses' power; of which, one thousand is at the Green-lanes pumping-station—the castle just described. Besides this, there are several large water-wheels; and the engines and wheels are arranged for the working of fifty-one pumps.

The daily* delivery of water by this machinery is now about twenty-five millions of gallons—nearly one-third of the water supply—or something like nine thousand millions of gallons annually. Of this yearly quantity, three hundred and fifty millions of gallons is consumed by trades; forty-five millions and a half gallons for flushing sewers, and other sanitary purposes; fifteen millions of gallons for fires; ninety millions of gallons for street watering; and about eight thousand five hundred millions of gallons for domestic service.

The company's town district has an area of about seventeen square miles; about one hundred and eight thousand houses are supplied; and the highest point to which the water is sent is at Hampstead—four hundred and fifty-four feet above Trinity high-water mark. No water is now drawn from the Thames by this company.

The distribution of this endless stream is made by about six hundred miles of cast-iron pipes, varying in diameter from four feet to three inches; and the tenants' communication lead pipes, which branch out from the mains, must have a joint length of at least fifteen hundred miles. To these underground tubes we must now add about a mile of broad iron tunnel, which has sucked up the New River channel from Sadler's Wells Theatre to the Lower-road, Islington, burying it from the public gaze as an extinct town river, after an honoured existence of two hundred and fifty years.

In all these iron pipes there are about four thousand five hundred sluice cocks, of diameters varying from three inches to four feet; and about eleven thousand fire-plugs, which have been fixed and are maintained at the company's cost. Water is annually supplied gratuitously to more than a thousand fires, and about one hundred pounds is annually paid by the company in rewards to persons who are first to call turncocks to fires. The capital of this enterprise is now nearly two millions and a half

* The phrase "daily" concerning all the water companies' supplies, means six days a week. The Sunday supply is always much smaller.

sterling, and it gives employment to at least three hundred men.

One water company scarcely differs from another, saving in the extent of its operations; hence, the details given respecting the New River and its modern works must be nearly the same in all water-supplying enterprises. On the north side of the Thames, the company that stands next in importance to the New River, is the East London, established in 1807, at Old Ford. It represents a capital of one million sterling, and it supplies eighty thousand houses daily with about seventeen millions of gallons of water. Its source of supply is the River Lea, above Tottenham, and its total length of mains and branches may be estimated at about three hundred and eighty miles.

The West Middlesex Water Works comes next, established in 1806, and its source of supply is now the Thames, at Hampton, in Middlesex. Its capital is about seven hundred thousand pounds, and it supplies thirty thousand nine hundred and fifty-two houses with about seven and a half millions of gallons daily. The total length of mains and services for the distribution of this water is two hundred and four miles.

The Chelsea Water Works, another north-side enterprise, was started in 1724, and it now supplies twenty-seven thousand houses with about eight millions and a half gallons of water, every day drawn from the Thames, at Seething, near Thames Ditton. Its mains and branches are estimated at about two hundred miles, and its present capital is nearly one million sterling.

The Grand Junction Company—the last on the north-side list—was born in 1798, and its source of supply, originally the Grand Junction Canal, which drew the waters from the rivers Colne and Brent, is now the Thames at Hampton. It distributes about seven millions and a half of gallons daily to about eighteen thousand houses; and its capital is nearly three-quarters of a million sterling. The length of its main pipeage is estimated at two hundred and ten miles.

The south side of the river Thames is now provided with three water companies, making, with the five on the north side, eight in all. The Southwark and Vauxhall Company stands first, by reason of its importance. It was started in 1822, and supplies a district originally satisfied by an ancient pond at St. Mary Overies, in Southwark. Its source of supply is the river Thames, at Hampton, and it furnishes ten millions and a half gallons daily, to about forty-two thousand houses. Its capital may be set down as about six hundred and fifty thousand pounds; and its mains and branches are estimated at five hundred and sixty-five miles.

The Lambeth Water Company was founded in 1735, and its capital is now about six hundred and eighty thousand pounds. It supplies thirty-three thousand houses with about seven millions of gallons daily, drawn from the river Thames between Kingston and Thames Ditton. The total length of the company's main pipes is now two hundred and sixty miles.

Lastly comes the Kent Waterworks, which

dates its origin from 1699, and which now includes the Plumstead Company. Its source of supply was originally the river Ravensbourne, but this has been abandoned, and the water is now drawn from Artesian wells. Its capital is three hundred and ten thousand pounds sterling; it supplies twenty-six thousand houses with four and a half millions of gallons daily; and its main pipes are one hundred and sixty-seven miles long. The Plumstead Waterworks, recently purchased by this company, represent a capital of fifty thousand pounds, sixteen miles of main pipes, and a supply of about half a million of gallons a day, drawn from wells in the chalk, to three thousand houses.

These figures and details, which I have taken great pains to collect from the companies themselves, show that the present water supply of London, by the eight existing waterworks, is about eighty-eight millions of gallons daily, sent through about two thousand five hundred and thirty miles of underground main pipes, all changed from wood to iron since 1810. This supply, which consumes a lake every day of sixty acres, six feet deep, flows into some three hundred and sixty-eight thousand houses and tenements,* through about six thousand miles of lead pipes; and the whole present capital of the water companies is seven millions six hundred and forty thousand pounds. Such a supply of water gives a daily average to each member of our metropolitan population of about thirty-one gallons—although no one really uses more than six gallons a day—at an average cost of about five per cent on the house rental.

It is surely something, in these times, to be able, by touching a tap at our own sweet will, to turn a stream into our pitchers from Hertfordshire or the other end of Middlesex. The ingenious and powerful mechanism that has helped us to do this, is something to be proud of amongst the many wonders of universal trade. If this machinery were to break down, if the sources of supply were to fail, if there were no inducement for keen trading companies to find out fresh fountains in the fruitful earth, our population could not advance another step, and we should wither from the face of the earth. We lie down at night with no misgivings on this head, and we rise in the morning with a full faith that the globe will never be sucked as dry as an exhausted orange.

THE FAIR MAN OF DARK FORTUNE.

ON the fourth of Floréal, year five of the Glorious Republic One and Indivisible—or on what ordinary Christian men and women would call April the twenty-third, seventeen hundred and ninety-six—one Guesno, a native of Douai, gave a little breakfast at the house of his friend and host, the citizen Richard. Guesno was a master carrier who had come to Paris on account of a robbery which one of his carmen had committed,

* Inhabited houses (Census, 1861) in London, 862,890.

and the breakfast he gave was in honour of Joseph Lesurques, his friend and townsman. Young, rich, ambitious, and respectable, formerly belonging to the Regiment of Auvergne, and now holding a responsible position at Douai, the handsome fair-haired Joseph Lesurques was about the most aristocratic person of citizen Guesno's acquaintance, and one whose society he especially courted and coveted—as, indeed, who would not? even in that season of universal equality and undistinguished citizenship. This breakfast in his honour was given to celebrate his arrival in Paris, whither he had removed with his wife and family, full of plans and projects for advancement and distinction, and determined to make his yearly income of fifteen thousand francs but the germ of his future fortune. Guesno did well, then, to cultivate his acquaintance, and show him what attention he could. The guests invited to meet him were three young men of about his own age, dressed in the height of the fashion, with frizzed heads, top-boots and silver spurs, large eye-glasses, two huge watch-chains each, small canes, and a profusion of jewellery; in fact, got up according to the canons of the Incroyables, to which special social sect they belonged. But they were gay, talkative, well bred, and Lesurques was soon on the best possible terms with them, provincial-like taking them into his confidence, and telling them of his plans quite unreservedly. Towards the middle of breakfast came in a fourth gentleman of the same school, a large, broad-built, dark-eyed citizen, with bushy eyebrows and a forbidding countenance, aged about twenty-five, rejoicing in the name of Courriol, and accompanied by one who should have been Madame Courriol, but who was only Madeleine Brébant. This dark-eyed sinister-looking citizen was soon on Guesno's guest, nor did he come by his invitation; he was a friend of M. Richard, whom he came to seek; but Guesno courteously invited him to the table, where he made himself conspicuous by his cynicism against Joseph Lesurques for his boyishness and the freshness of his hopes. After breakfast all the guests went to the Palais Royal, where they had their café noir like good citizens, then separated, and saw each other no more.

Four days after, on the eighth of this same flowery month (April 27), the guard of the Charenton Barrière saw, early in the morning, four horsemen ride through the gate out of the city. They all had good horses, but evidently hired hacks, not their own property, and they talked loudly and gaily amongst each other. But had the guard looked more narrowly he would have seen that they wore sabres beneath their cloaks, and that their anxious eyes and haggard looks were in strange discord with their noisy mirth. Last of the four, and riding alone, was a large, broad-built, dark-eyed citizen, heavy and sullen; the same who had ridiculed Lesurques at Guesno's breakfast—Courriol, not the husband of poor Madeleine Brébant. Between twelve and one, the four horsemen rode leisurely into the pretty little village of Mont-

geron, on the way to Melun, where they stopped at the door of the Hôtel Evrard, one having galloped forward to order breakfast for the rest. And in after days the landlord, Evrard, used to depose ruefully to the fact of their having eaten enormously, like half-famished horsemen as they were; while Santon, the maid, could not keep her eyes off them, fascinated by the good looks of some, and the wolfish appetite of all. They were a notable party altogether, and easy to be remembered.

After breakfast they smoked, then went to the village casino, where they had the orthodox café noir; at three, riding off and onward, through the dark elm-shadowed road which runs between Montgeron and the wood of Sénart. Talking carelessly, but ever with the same anxious eyes, they clattered over the paved streets of Lieusaint, a picturesque little village then in the midst of a wood, famous in history for the hunting adventure of Henry IV. and the patriarchal reception of the Miller Michaud: but there they met with a slight mischance. One of the horses had cast its shoe, while one of the men had broken the chain of his silver spur, both of which disasters must be repaired on the instant. This was not difficult. The rider with the damaged spur rode up to the door of Madame Châtelain, a lemonade seller, asking for a cup of coffee and a bit of string wherewith to fasten his spur. Madame was complaisant but clumsy, so the horseman impatiently called to her maid, fat, good-tempered Grossetête, whose fingers seemed more capable than her mistress's, and she mended the spur, not very much amiss, with packthread and a multitude of knots. Whereby both women looked at the horseman well, and were able to swear to him when they met him again; and as it was a fair bright face, they thought to themselves that they did not lose their time in the occupation. Meanwhile the others had alighted at Champeau's Hotel, where they had some wine, and the stable-boy led the shoeless horse to Smith Motteau's to be reshod. Then they all went back in a body to the citizeness Châtelain's, played billiards, and joked with Grossetête and the rest; and so whiled away the hours like merry gentlemen come out of Paris for a day's fresh air and country amusement. But not wishing to be belated, they paid their reckoning in good time, mounted their horses, and rode off tranquilly on their way: the last rays of the setting sun shining bright and clear as they wound down the quiet road.

In an hour's time, back came one at a thundering gallop; he had forgotten his sabre, which lay on a table in Champeau's Hotel. He was the same handsome unlucky fellow who had broken his spur which Grossetête had mended, and misfortune seemed to pursue him, or, he was singularly inexact and careless. While Champeau was fussing for the sword, and Madame Champeau exchanged civilities with the cavalier who was drinking a glass of brandy at the hotel door, the noise of carriage wheels was heard, and the Courier of Lyons drew up to change horses. After

one glance the cavalier put spurs to his horse, and thundered off again on the darkening road.

The courier, Excoffon, had but one passenger; a pleasant companion enough, who had booked himself from Lyons under the name of citizen Laborde, and because the times were bad, and the roads not over safe, citizen Laborde was furnished with a dagger, which yet he did not care to make too much show of. But Excoffon, a strong muscular man, was armed to the teeth, and by no means a pleasant person to molest, judging from appearances; so citizen Laborde had no fear, he said, pleasantly, and both together would prove a match for most things.

After an hour's heavy jolting, they came to a sharp steep hollow, overshadowed with trees and thick bushes, with an ugly hill to climb on the other side. It was an uncomfortable bit, and the courier called to the postilion to make the best of his way through it, for the night was dark and his charge was heavy, and he was behind his time already. As he spoke, four men sprang out of the bushes, caught the leading horse, and cut the traces; then, before the poor postilion could utter a cry, struck him down with a sabre-cut, severing his head clean from his body. At the same moment, Laborde flung himself on the courier, and stabbed him to the heart, as he was rising to learn the cause of the delay. The murderers then dragged the body out of the chaise, cut off the head to make sure that dead men could tell no tales, and rifled the bags: getting as their booty seventy-five thousand francs in gold, silver, bank-notes, and bills; but leaving on the ground a sabre, a grey riding-coat turned up with blue, a scabbard, and a broken silver spur mended with string. The leading horse was then given to the false Laborde, whose true name was Dutrochat; and the five men rode back into Paris, entering through the *Barrière of Rambouillet*, between four and five in the morning. The patrol found the post-horse wandering on the boulevard near the *Palais Royal*; and the four hacks were returned to the horse-dealer *Muiron*, trembling and covered with foam, as if they had been long and hardly ridden. They were taken back by the same two men who had hired them: *Courriol* and one *Bernard*, his friend.

The next day all Paris rang with the murder, and to *Daubanton*, the chief magistrate of the district, was given the conduct of the case and the discovery of the murderers. And first was arrested *Bernard*, the horse hirer; then *Courriol* was looked for, and after a time found at *Château-Thierry*, concealed in the house of citizen *Bruer*; and on him some of the bank-notes and bills known to have been in the possession of the hapless courier. And then *Guesno* got into trouble, and was under official surveillance and suspicion because he had had dealings with *Bruer* and *Bernard*, and because *Courriol* and *Madeleine Brébant* had breakfasted with him on that fateful fourth of *Floralé*. But *Guesno* was so clearly innocent that he was discharged at once; nevertheless, his papers were taken from him, and he was bidden to go to the office for

them on the morrow. Accordingly, the next day he set out for the office of the citizen magistrate *Daubanton*, on the way meeting with *Lesurques*, whom he asked to accompany him, telling him at the same time of his disagreeable arrest. *Lesurques*, the young, handsome, and respectable ex-militaire, the possessor of nearly four hundred a year, serene in the consciousness of present good, and hopeful of the better future, without enemies and guiltless of crime—*Lesurques*, the fashionable and prosperous, was glad to lend the aid of his untarnished reputation to his less secure friend, and help him to overcome this embarrassment with all the influence of his position. He was very happy to do his friend this slight service, he said, tossing back his bright brown hair, so turned and went with him to *Daubanton's*, without hesitation; and soon the two men were in the ante-chamber, while waiting the magistrate's pleasure, gazing curiously at the crowd passing in and out. In that ante-chamber, also watching the crowd, sat *Santon*, servant of the *Evrards* at *Montgeron*, and *Grossetête*, *Madame Châtelain's* fat peasant-girl at *Lieusaint*. They stared long and eagerly at the two men, then beckoned to *Heudon*, *Daubanton's* head man; and he, after speaking with them earnestly a while, went through the ante-chamber to the small room where the magistrate sat writing.

Daubanton heard his story with marked emotion; sent for the two women, spoke to them, even cross-examined them; then, satisfied with their report, he suddenly ordered *Guesno* and *Lesurques* to be brought before him, and confronted them with the maids, face to face. And then the women turned round, and positively and passionately swore to *Lesurques* as one of the four men who had ridden into *Lieusaint* on the eighth of *Floralé*, and had left a silver spur, a sabre, and a pool of blood on the road where *Excoffon*, the Courier of Lyons, lay murdered. *Santon*, the hotel servant, had no doubt of him. She knew him specially because he had wanted to pay the bill in notes, but "*le gros brun*"—the large dark man *Courriol*—had interfered, and made him pay in silver. And as for *Grossetête*, if she did not know him, who should? For had she not mended his silver spur with twine, and had she not looked at his fair and gracious face, longer than mayhap she would have looked at it had it been less comely? Then *Champeau* and his wife were called, and they, too, swore that *Lesurques* was the light-haired horseman who had had his broken spur mended with twine, and who had come galloping back for his sabre, just as the poor courier had driven to the door for fresh relays. Of *Guesno*, also, they were equally positive; but he had established an alibi before, so was in no greater danger now than he had been; and the mistake as to his identity did not shake the confidence of the accusers or the magistrate in the certain guilt of *Lesurques*. So, now six men were taken; out of whom *Guesno* and *Bruer* were weeded, leaving four accused: *Lesurques* the most positively recognised of all.

At first, the ex-officer was confident and calm. He could prove his innocence as easily as his friend Guesno had done, and could come out of the affair with hands as pure and spotless as ever. He wrote to all his friends, and gathered his resources together, getting fifteen good and substantial witnesses to prove his presence in Paris during the whole of the eighth of Floréal; consequently, his entire innocence of the murder. This was so easy to do, that the thing seemed but a bagatelle. Of his witnesses, the most responsible was the rich jeweller Legrand, who swore that citizen Lesurques had passed the morning of the eighth with him and citizen jeweller Aldenof; and that he was particular about the date, because on that day he had sundry professional dealings with citizen Aldenof, selling him a silver spoon for a pair of earrings; so, of course, he remembered all the circumstances well. Aldenof swore to the same thing; and Hilaire Ledru, the artist, and Chauffer, the cousin of the accused, in their turn swore that they had breakfasted with him on that day at Rue Montorgueil, and taken coffee together after; and Baudart, the painter, swore that he had been invited to dine at his house, but was prevented going by reason of his service at the National Guard. In confirmation whereof, he showed Lesurques' note of invitation dated 8th Floréal, and his own official mandate and voucher; stating further, that though he had not dined with him, yet he had gone to his house in the evening, and quitted it only when he went to bed. And various lodgers added to this, their testimony that they had met him at various times that day and evening on the stairs and landing, &c. And then Legrand, to prove his attestation more fully, brought his books to show that he had had, as he said, trade dealings with Aldenof on the day mentioned; and handed them over to the magistrate for inspection. But at the first glance Gohier, the judge, cried out, "A forgery!" and flung the book back to the counsel of the accused for inspection. And there, sure enough, was the date "9th Floréal" written in paler ink beneath, with "8" marked over, in strong black lines! A forgery without doubt, and clumsily done into the bargain.

Legrand, pressed on this point, grew confused. He hesitated, stammered, contradicted himself, and finally confessed that he had not made the entry until some days after; and that he had made it at first under the date of the ninth, but afterwards changed it to the eighth, when he recollected matters more clearly. It was no forgery, but a simple mistake honestly set right when discovered, and he was not guilty of false witness or perjury, as Gohier, the citizen president, declared. He ended by saying that though he could not now swear, yet he believed in the innocence of his friend. But his evidence was enough. Lesurques, on the point of being acquitted, was now held as the author of a cunningly devised plot; a plot in which the cursed leaven of aristocracy was at work. He had bought his witnesses, he, the rich man, able to corrupt the honesty of weak citizens,

as is the way of infirm human nature; wherefore no credence was to be given to any of them. His guilt was proved, said Gohier, summing up, more as an advocate against the prisoner than as the judge; the testimony of the servants and innkeepers on the road was of more account than all these false oaths of interested or loving friends; let the case be closed and justice done—Joseph Lesurques is guilty of the murder of the citizen Excoffon—away with him to the dungeon and the scaffold!

At that moment, while the jury had retired to consider their verdict, a woman, pale, breathless, and violently agitated, rushed to the front of the tribunal, crying out, "He is innocent, and Dubosc, whom he resembles, is the murderer in his stead." This was poor Madeleine Brébant, whose conscience pressed her too heavily, and whose testimony to the innocence of Lesurques, though it went to inculpate her lover, could no longer be withheld. But she was thrust back. "It is too late," said Gohier, rudely, "the debate is closed." The jury never heard her evidence, and when they came back the die was cast. Lesurques, Courriol, and Bernard, were condemned to death, and Richard to twenty-four years at the galleys.

Lesurques rose, declared his innocence quietly and firmly; and then Courriol rose with more heat, saying: "Yes, I am guilty, I confess my crime, but Lesurques is innocent, and Bernard has had no part in the affair." This he repeated four times, but without effect: what good could be done when the judge had made himself the hostile advocate? But Courriol did not let the matter rest. From his condemned cell he wrote a long letter to the judge, saying that he had never seen or known Lesurques (had he forgotten the breakfast at the Rue des Boucheries?), and naming as his copartners in the murder, Vidal, Rossi, Dutrochat, and Dubosc. The likeness, very striking, between Lesurques and Dubosc, who was a brown-haired man but who wore a light-coloured wig as a disguise, had led to the mistake, and to the false swearing of the witnesses. All this Courriol wrote with earnestness and exactness, while standing on the brink of the grave whither his crimes and his vices had hurried him.

Then, Lesurques' friends bestirred themselves diligently; and Madeleine Brébant gave her testimony—the same as Courriol's—clearly and without reserve; and the Directory was petitioned, and the Corps Législatif appealed to; but in vain. The sentence was confirmed; Lesurques must die. The existence of Dubosc was not believed in; it was a clever highwayman's trick to save one of their body; while as for Vidal, Rossi, and Dutrochat, justice would acknowledge their complicity when made sure of their existence. At present it would act on the old proverb of the bird in the hand and the couple in the bush, and close its fingers tight over what it had caught. Lesurques saw that all hope was at an end. He wrote the following calm and touching letters to his widow, and to the unknown in whose place he was to suffer,

letters curious for the heathen kind of heroism expressed in them.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—No one avoids his fate. I shall be legally assassinated. But at least I shall meet my death with the courage which ought to be expected from such a man as I. I send thee my hair. When thy children have grown, divide it among them. It is the only inheritance which I can bequeath them."

To the unknown he wrote, causing his letter to be published in the various journals of the time:

"You in whose stead I must die, be content with the sacrifice of my life. If ever you fall into the hands of justice, remember my three children covered with shame, remember their desolate mother, and do not perpetuate the miseries caused by our most fatal resemblance."

In another letter, to a friend, he expressed his conviction that some day the truth would be known, adding, "I die, the victim of a mistake." But a mistake for which there was now no remedy. On the ninth of Brumaire, Year Five (October 30th, 1796), Joseph Lesurques laid down his life, his youth, his brilliant hopes, and his fair fame, upon the scaffold, because certain thick-witted country people were over positive, and because a murderer had chosen to disguise himself in a flaxen wig. He came to the place of execution dressed in white in token of his innocence. And as they stood together on the scaffold Courriol again cried out to the crowd: "He is innocent! I am guilty!"

Seven days after this judicial murder, the magistrate Daubanton, who had lately had great misgivings, and who, to do his memory justice, was afterwards one of the most energetic defenders of Lesurques' innocence, had proofs of the existence of that Dubosc hitherto considered fabulous, and of his habit of disguising himself as a fair man, when out on his errands of crime; for, M. Jarry, justice of the peace at Besançon, had arrested him for robbery; and thus one of the disputed points in this tangle of persons and events was cleared up. And soon after this, the man Dutrochat, who had booked himself as a through passenger from Lyons under the name of Laborde, was also taken; and, under examination, gave as the names of the assassins those which Courriol had given, namely, Courriol, Vidal, Rossi, Dubosc, and himself. Of Lesurques he had never heard speak among them; but Dubosc, who had planned the whole matter, was he who wore the silver spurs, one of which, fastened with twine, had been lost on the road; and it was he who, disguised in his flaxen wig, had been the "fair man," and the handsomest of the party. Dutrochat was condemned to death, having first betrayed to justice his special friend and mate, Vidal. Vidal and Dubosc were confined together, waiting their turn for trial; but they were both determined men and capable men, and not inclined to remain in prison a moment longer than they were obliged; so they set to work and managed to break through two thick walls, besides overcoming other obstacles, and, were

making off, when Dubosc fell and broke his leg. Vidal got clear away for the moment, and, when his leg was cured, Dubosc followed his example. They were eventually recaptured, though not directly—Dubosc remaining at liberty for some years—and both suffered the extreme penalty due to their crimes. When taken before the various witnesses—Santon, Grossette, and the others—who had been so positive of the persons of Guesno and Lesurques, they all confessed their mistake: *Vidal was the man for whom they had mistaken Guesno, and Dubosc was Lesurques.*

But it was too late now. The deaths of Vidal, Dubosc, and Rossi, the real murderers, could not bring back the innocent victim to life, nor restore the happiness and honour of his house. His children were orphans and ruined, his property was confiscated to the state, his home was desolate, and his name dishonoured; and the public shrugged their shoulders pityingly, and said, "A case of mistaken identity, and no one to blame!" It was a misfortune which nothing could now repair, and let the dead past lie, they said; why disturb its grave? The fatality had extended to all concerned. The mother of poor Lesurques went mad on the day of his execution, and died two years after, never recovering her reason; his widow also went mad, and was insane for several years, but finally came to herself before she, too, died of shame and sorrow; his young son, while still a lad, went into Bonaparte's army and perished in the Russian snows; his daughter, Madame Danjou, threw herself into the Seine, in despair at a cold and brutal expression of M. Meilheurat, who, embarrassed by her prayers, said hastily, "We are not certain, madame, that your father *was* innocent."

How to stem such a torrent of adverse fate? Would it not be better to bend meekly to the storm? A few friends of the Lesurques family—notably Messieurs Mequillet and Henry d'Audigier—object to this philosophical way of accepting misfortunes. For very many years, every effort has been made to induce the various governments to rescind the decree which pronounced Joseph Lesurques guilty of the murder of the Courier of Lyons, to restore his confiscated property to his family, and formally pronounce him innocent, and condemned by misadventure. Even now, at this moment, Jules Favre, one of the clearest reasoners and soundest lawyers in France, is employed to this end: though only one daughter, Virginie Lesurques, and Madame Danjou's children, remain to carry on the war and benefit by the victory, when it comes. As yet, but little positive way has been made. Certainly Louis XVIII. and Charles X. both restored a small portion of the confiscated estates to the family, but the great act of restitution and acknowledgment has never been made; and Jules Favre and the others say they will not rest until they have accomplished this.

It will come at last. Justice, though slow, is always sure in the end, and men are not

wilfully false, or cruel, or unjust, in matters which do not affect themselves, and where no interests are at stake and no passions are aroused. And though it may be embarrassing for one government to declare the decrees of another government mistaken and unjust, thereby damaging its own pretensions to infallibility and opening the door to many perplexing retrospections, yet it will come in time, if the advocates are calm and persistent, and keep up the agitation with energy, without making it an official sore, or a public nuisance.

NIL DARPAN.

FOR the last few months the overland mails from India, after giving us the customary budget of news—to the effect that it has been very hot somewhere, and hotter than ever somewhere else; that pacification, reorganisation, regeneration, irrigation, and irritation, are going on as usual in different parts of the country; that there has been a “row” at Simla between two officers of such high position as not to be revealed to the naked eye of the public; that an ensign has been dismissed the service for conduct unbecoming the character of an officer and a gentleman towards his colonel’s wife’s poodle; that the Hindoos and Mahomedans, in some place with an unpronounceable name, have been at open hostilities in consequence of a religious dispute: the Mahomedans having polluted a temple, and the Hindoos retaliated by defiling a mosque; that there has been another case of Suttee, the authorities saying that they couldn’t help it, and the usual investigation in which nothing is investigated having been set on foot; that cotton is tranquil, corahs in a state of much anxiety, and mule twist in an undecided condition;—after the customary budget of news, in fact, the mail generally tells us that Nil Darpan is still exciting a great deal of public attention.

What is Nil Darpan?

This is a question now being asked by a large proportion of the public who have been goaded by frequent repetition into an unwilling curiosity. Is it a place, or a person, or something to eat? They have not the slightest idea, and the discussion has been going on for so long that it now seems hopeless to begin to read it up. Be it known that Nil Darpan is a play written by a native of Bengal, in the Bengalee language, and that the meaning of the title is “The Mirror of Indigo Planting:” the declared object of the author being to hold the mirror up to nature, and to give a reflexion of the system of indigo planting as now practised in Bengal. With the political quarrel, to which the circulation of this play by certain local authorities has given rise, we have nothing here to do; but the reader may find some account of the circumstances which have led to the dispute, in an article called Cotton and India, in a previous number; and it is right to state, in order that we may not be supposed to endorse the grave charges which the work contains, that not even the persons

who gave it circulation pretend to justify those charges, which have some dim reference to a state of things which existed fifty years ago, but which, it has been declared by a recent official inquiry, has no foundation in the present day. That the satire is a malicious one, and written for a political object, there can be no doubt. And when it is remembered that the drama is a favourite medium among the Hindoos for the expression of public feeling, it becomes apparent that it is calculated not a little to mislead. Our object in noticing it here, however, is a literary rather than a political one; and the reader who follows our description should remember that Hindoo statements, even when not inspired by political prejudice, must always be taken with a great many grains of salt.

The Nil Darpan, we must give warning in the beginning, is not a very lively performance. It would have no chance of being listened to in any London theatre. We doubt, indeed, if all the art and knowledge of stage effect which have been spent on the Colleen Bawn could dress it up to the point of endurance. Nevertheless, it is quite of an airy character; it is as used up as *The Stranger*, compared with the majority of pieces on the Bengalee stage, which belong decidedly to the elephantine walks of the drama. The Nil Darpan is elephantine to be sure; but the elephant it resembles, is a sportive animal; it can dance, and stand on its head, and would have no objection to take wine with the clown.

Those of our readers who have ever lived in India have probably seen a native play performed at a native gentleman’s house. In Calcutta, if the visitor be a person of any note, he will receive more invitations to representations of the kind than he cares to accept. Let us suppose that he avails himself of the invitation of, say, Baboo Mukhanauth Lalshrab Ghose, the great merchant and banker. The invitation is for eight o’clock, and, at about that hour, having dined at seven, and being already in evening dress, he sets out. His destination is sure to be a long way off, as the European gentleman would infallibly live in the best quarter of the town, and the native gentleman would as infallibly live in the worst—which is the native gentleman’s fault, by the way, as he came to the place first, and had first choice. The house of the guest is situated in a street very much like what Park-lane in London is; that of the host in a street very like what Field-lane in London was; the thoroughfare between the two is of course characterised by a gradual declension from bad to worse, until it becomes as bad as the worst can be. The approach to the house is indicated by a horrible odour of oil and natives: the two scents being the more associated through the fact of the latter having a habit of rubbing the former over their skins.

The effluvium of oil, however, proceeds mainly from large earthen pans with floating lights in them, placed along the road to mark the way, and from coloured lamps of the Vauxhall kind, neatly arranged wherever they can be

most easily knocked down by the crowd : which is of a ragged and squalid description that we would defy anybody to find, out of the purlieus of an Eastern city. It is less ragged, perhaps, than it might be, if its members wore more clothes; for, as in the majority of cases the garment is confined to the neighbourhood of the waist, its holding on at all is a guarantee of its tolerable entirety; but with the slightest augmentation of the toilette the dilapidations begin, and these have an extent which put decency and adornment equally out of the question. Moreover, as the season for entertainments such as that of Baboo Mukhanauth Lal-shrab Ghose is generally the "cold weather," and as cold nights in Calcutta are very apt to be damp, you may imagine the mist in which the whole scene is enveloped, all the oil lights to the contrary notwithstanding. Muggy would be a cold word to describe the state of the atmosphere; and one of those roaring thoroughfares in London where they sell fried fish, and everything else that can be sold cheap to an overflowing population on a Saturday night in November, can give but a faint idea of the sights and the sounds and the scents that assail our visitor as he hears his destination.

Great men's houses in Eastern cities usually turn their backs upon the public thoroughfare, and this of the Baboo shows nothing but a wall and a gate to the common people. Our visitor has probably driven himself to the place in his buggy, and here his syce, or groom, extricates himself from his perch behind, and endeavours to induce the people, now crowded more densely than ever, to get out of the way. This is accomplished after a great deal of getting under the horse's head, and among his legs, and we are not sure that we may not add through the spokes of the wheels, has been gone through on the part of the populace, and threats to "walk into" them with his whip on the part of the Sahib, who at last finds himself in the court-yard, or "compound," as it is called—a curious word, which may be described, in racing parlance, as coming by Corruption out of Portuguese. Inside the gateway there are more lights than ever, both of the pan on the ground and the Vauxhall variety, and on each side of the covered pathway through which the Sahib, having alighted from his buggy, now proceeds, are statues the size of life: some popular, some classical, some both, and nearly all well known in Europe. They are cast in plaster for the most part, though one or two appear strangely built of wood, and are, in point of colour, what the heralds call "proper;" all are more or less dirty and damaged, and contribute their share to the general effect of the approaches to the place—which is that of the place having a great holiday, and holding a final festivity previous to being indicted for a nuisance.

The house has a large open court in the centre, which, being covered over for the occasion, now forms the great reception hall. Around, and accessible by flights of stairs, both

from inside and outside, are the private apartments: to all of which the visitors have access, except those of the "ladies of the house," who may be observed, however, from behind semi-transparent screens, looking down upon the scene below with much curiosity, their chirpy voices suggesting the idea of innumerable birds upon branches. It is not considered well-bred to stare at the places whence these sounds come, or to take any notice, indeed, of the other signs of feminine existence, even though you occasionally see a pair of eyes shining through a (perhaps) chance hole in a curtain, or a hand and arm (beautifully braceleted) hastily closing the said curtain which such hand and arm have incautiously drawn aside. The hall, it must be said, is brilliantly lighted, and presents a general effect of mirrors and gilding and Oriental architecture, very pleasing to the eye. Below, upon a carpet upon which no man not admitted to an equality may venture, is seated the host, smoking at intervals a hookah, which an attendant keeps studiously alight for him. It is here that he receives his guests, for whom, besides the play, he has provided such other amusements as can be obtained. Native minstrels in one part of the hall sing "*Taza, balaza, now be now*," "*Hillee, pillee punneah*," and other popular native songs, besides some English songs, of the class of "Home, sweet home," which they murder most melodiously. Nautch girls elsewhere go through the graceful attitudes which here pass for ballet, accompanied by the monotonous chant which is the local substitute for opera. In another place may be found native jugglers, who perform the most wonderful feats without exciting anybody's wonder, and the most extraordinary delusions with which nobody is deluded. Should any wandering performers from Europe—Ethiopian Serenaders and the like—happen to be in Calcutta, they will most probably be engaged; and so you may choose between the East and the West in your music, as in your refreshments. As far as the latter are concerned, they consist mainly of Attar and Pân—the Attar for the delectation of your fingers and your nose; the Pân to put into your mouth, and to eat if you can. But in a room up-stairs there is always laid out a British ball-supper, with chicken and ham, jelly, trifle, and all complete, with "champagne up to the mast-head," as you may hear an enchanted ensign exclaim, but with the strange addition of bottles of brandy placed all down the table, varied at intervals by bottles of beer. The natives have a great notion of the sahibs' powers of drinking the two last liquids, and I fancy they expect the very few European ladies who are usually present on such occasions also to indulge in them. Of course, the host does not himself sit down to the feast; but the European guests, to do them justice, console themselves for his absence, and make themselves quite at home.

The play, which is the prominent entertainment of the evening, takes place most likely at one end of the hall, where a stage is fitted up

after the manner of temporary erections of the kind in most other places—at a country-house in England, for example. In front are a sufficient number of seats for the more devoted adherents of the drama, who take their places at the beginning of the evening, and keep them until the end, whenever that may be. The latter period is a little doubtful, for nobody is in a hurry, and the construction of the drama appears to be such that it may end whenever the performers or the audience please, and may be carried on as long as either can keep awake. We doubt whether any of the European guests ever saw one out, especially if they have been paying much attention to the supper up-stairs. But we believe the performance generally lasts all night, "and when they ring the morning bell the battle scarce is done." The host and any members of the family who please may go to bed occasionally—the beds are great Paris or London machines, placed in the public rooms, and open to the observation of the company all the evening—getting up again if it so suits them, and looking in once more at the theatre; for "going to bed" is not such a grave matter in the East as in the West, and among the natives, at any rate, involves very little change of costume. The majority of the confirmed playgoers, however, seem to sit up all night, which they can do the more easily as they have probably slept half the day; and they sit listening to the eloquence of the author and the elocution of the actors, in a greater state of rapture than, in the case of a set of fat gentlemen in a perpetual state of perspiration, would be associated with Western ideas of comfort. The character of the performance, as we have already remarked, is decidedly dreary. The girls are personated by boys, and the men by blackguards; and we will back an Eastern blackguard against his brother in the West, for a combination of almost every quality that can make the exhibition of human character unpleasant.

Everybody concerned in the exhibition appears to labour under the impression that Art is short, and Life is long, and that "take your time, Miss Lucy," is a moral and a model maxim. Action takes its chance, and dialogue has everything its own way. A disgusting-looking rascal on the stage, understood to be a king, has been holding forth for half an hour to a feminine-looking disreputability crouching at his feet. The fellow talks so fast, and in a manner so different from that in which you are accustomed to hear the language spoken in private life, that you don't understand what is going on. You ask a native gentleman in the intervals of the puffing with which he tries to dismiss his perspiration, what the deuce it means? He answers in general terms that the king is supposed to be angry. Another of the characters, with a most hang-dog appearance, has the conversation all to himself for a mortal half-hour, droning and whining to a distressing extent. You ask a placid and pân-consuming native what this personage is about, and you are informed in reply that he is jealous. It takes a long time

to develop the passions—on the stage at least—in the East, and playgoers should have the patience of Job.

We mention these particulars in order to give the reader some idea of the dramatic treatment which the Nil Darpan would receive in its native land, and of the singularly cheerless character of the production which has made so much noise, not only in that land, but in our own. What it is "all about" we will now proceed to detail: first, however, as in duty bound, giving a list of the

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,

who are:

MEN.

Goluk Chunder Basu.
Nobin Madhab, } sons of Goluk Chunder.
Bindu Madhab, }
Sadhu Churn, a neighbouring ryot.
Ray Churn, Sadhu's brother.
Gopi Churn Das, the dewan.
J. J. Rose, } indigo-planters.
P. P. Wood, }
The Amin, or land-measurer.
Akhalasi, a tent-pitcher.
Taidgir, native superintendent of indigo cultivation.
Magistrate, Amla, Attorney, Deputy-inspector,
Pundit, Keeper of the Jail, Doctor, a Cow-
keeper, a Native Doctor, Four Boys, a Lattial,
or Clubman, a Herdsman.

WOMEN.

Sabitri, wife of Goluk Chunder.
Soirindri, wife of Nobin.
Saralota, wife of Bindu Madhab.
Reboti, wife of Sadhu Churn.
Khetromani, daughter of Sadhu.
Aduri, maid-servant in Goluk Chunder's house.
Podi Moyrani, a sweetmeat-maker.

The first scene of the first act is laid at the gola, or storehouse, of Goluk Chunder Basu, a head ryot, or cultivator. He and a friend, Sadhu Churn, a neighbouring ryot, are discovered sitting. They have a mutual grievance, which both are discussing. They cannot live, they say, in Svarapur (the name of the district), where they used to be prosperous upon general crops, but which the European landholder has now reduced to a state of poverty (for everybody but himself) through insisting upon the plantation of indigo. He has even occupied, for the purpose, the ground about the tank, from which the women will henceforth be excluded; and he has threatened that Nobin Madhab, a son of Goluk Chunder Basu, shall drink the water of seven factories—that is, be confined therein—unless due submission be made; nay, that the houses of the family shall be thrown into the river, and that the family shall eat their rice in the factory godown (cellar), unless they consent to the Sahib's wishes. To them enters Nobin, whom the father asks how he has prospered in his interview with the planter. "Sir," says Nobin, "does the cobra shrink from biting the little child on the lap of its mother, on account of the sorrow of the mother? I flattered him much, but he understood nothing by that. He kept to his word, and said, 'Give us sixty bighas of land, secured by written documents, and take fifty rupees, then we shall

close the year's accounts at once." The father says this bargain will ruin them, as it will prevent them from growing rice; and, he adds, "We have no chance in a dispute with the Sahibs. They bind and beat us. It is for us to suffer." Nobin says that, for his part, he intends to bring the case into court. After that, exeunt omnes to bathe.

The second scene is at the house of Sadhu Churn. Ray Churn enters, with his plough, and makes some remarks, apparently addressed to that instrument, to the effect that the stupid Amin (land-measurer) is a tiger: he having just marked off five bigahs of his land to be sown with indigo. This will ruin him, he says, and his family will starve. He is interrupted in his recital of the family prospects by the entrance of Khetromani, Sadhu Churn's daughter, who, however, answers no dramatic end by her appearance, her mission being merely to say, in reply to a question, that her father will be there immediately, and to receive his respect for a "little water, as his stomach is on the point of bursting." She goes for the water; in the mean time Sadhu enters; and the brothers then proceed with the discussion of their grievances, Sadhu especially apostrophising his "burnt forehead," which is a metaphorical manner of expressing ill-fortune. Khetromani now returns with the water, and her uncle describes the quarrel he has had with the Amin, whose marking off of the ground was, he says, like thrusting burnt sticks into his body. The consultation is put an end to, by the appearance of the Amin himself, with two servants, who bind Ray Churn, and tell him he must go with them to the factory, as he is wanted "to make signatures in the account books" (forged signatures of course): he being able to read and write, and the object of the planter being to show that contracts had been made for the cultivation of indigo. Ray Churn drinks his water, and is carried off; but not before the Amin has cast eyes of admiration upon Khetromani, and made the remark that, having sold his sister to the Sahib for an overseer's post, he thinks he should get higher promotion if he could get Khetromani to sell also.

The scene then changes to the verandah of the large bungalow belonging to the factory of Begunbari. Here J. J. Wood, the proprietor, is found with Gopi Churn Das, his dewan, or head man, whom he is violently abusing for not getting in more advances from the ryots, and whom he threatens with a dose of "shamechand" (a leather strap) for his pains: taking down that instrument from the wall as an earnest of his intention. The dewan excuses himself most piteously, accusing his "evil forehead" (ill fortune) for allowing him to work like a slave for his master, without getting any credit for it. And he adds; "Sahib, what sign of fear hast thou seen in me? When I entered on the indigo profession, I threw off all fear, shame, and honour; and the destroying of cows, of Brahmins, of women, have become my ornaments, and I now lie down in bed keeping the jail as

my pillow,"—that is to say, thinking of the jail, and expecting to go to it. While this improving conversation is proceeding, the Amin brings in Ray Churn, bound, with Sadhu accompanying him. Some of the scene which follows is worth giving textually:

Wood. Why are this wicked fool's hands bound with cords?

Gopi. My lord, this Sadhu Churn is a head ryot; but through the enticement of Nobin Madhab he has been led to engage in the destruction of indigo.

Sadhu. My lord, I do nothing unjust against your indigo, nor am I doing now, nor have I power to do anything wrong; willingly or unwillingly I have prepared the indigo, and also I am ready to make it this time. But then everything has its probability and improbability; if you want to make powder of eight inches thickness to enter a pipe half an inch thick, will it not burst? I am a poor ryot, keep only one and a half ploughs, have only twenty bigahs of land for cultivation; and now, if I am to give nine bigahs out of that for indigo, that must occasion my death. But, my lord, what is that to you? It is only my death!

Gopi. The Sahib fears lest you keep him confined in the godown of your eldest babu.

Sadhu. Now, Sir Dewanji, what you say is *striking a corpse (useless labour)*; what mite am I that I should imprison the Sahib, mighty and glorious!

Gopi. Sadhu, now away with your high-flown language; it does not sound well from the tongue of a peasant; it is like a sweeper's broom touching the body. (*The sweeper is a pariah, and his touch is contamination.*)

Wood. Now the rascal has become very wise.

Amin. That fool explains the laws and magistrate's orders to the common people, and thus raises confusion. His brother draws the ploughshare, and he uses the high word *pratapshali*—glorious!

Gopi. The child of the preparer of cow-dung balls (*the cheapest kind of fuel*) has become a court naeb (*legal officer*). My lord, the establishment of schools in the villages has increased the violence of the ryots.

Wood. I shall write to our Indigo Planters' Association, to make a petition to government for stopping the schools in villages. We shall fight to secure stopping the schools.

Amin. That fool wants to bring the case into court.

Wood. (*To Sadhu.*) You are very wicked. You have twenty bigahs, of which, if you employ nine bigahs for indigo, why cannot you cultivate the other nine bigahs [*a little slip in arithmetic*] for rice?

Gopi. My lord, the debt which is credited to him can be made use of, for bringing the whole twenty bigahs within our own power.

Sadhu. (*To himself.*) O oh! *The witness for the spirit-seller is the drunkard!* (*Openly.*) If the nine bigahs, which are marked off for the cultivation of the indigo, were worked by the plough and kine of the factory, then could I use the other nine bigahs for rice. The work which is to be done in the rice-field is only a fourth of that which is necessary in the indigo-field; consequently, if I am to remain engaged in these nine bigahs, the remaining eleven bigahs will be without cultivation.

Wood. You dolt! You are very wicked, you scoundrel! [*Haranjádá in the original, which is a stronger epithet.*] You must take the money in advance; you must cultivate the land; you are a very scoundrel. (*Kicks him.*) You shall leave off everything when

you meet with shamchand. (*Takes shamchand, the leather strap, from the wall.*)

Sadhu. My lord, the hand is only blackened by killing a fly—your beating only injures you. I am too mean. We—

Ray. (*Angrily.*) O my brother, you had better stop; let them take what they can; our very stomach is on the point of falling down from hunger. The whole day is passed; we have not been able yet either to bathe or take our food.

Amin. O rascal! where is your court now? (*Twists his ears.*)

Ray. (*With violent panting.*) I now die! My mother! my mother!

Wood. Beat that cursed nigger! (*Beats with shamchand.*)

While this scene is enacting, Nobin Madhab enters; he intercedes for Sadhu in vain; the latter is led off to receive his fifty rupees in advance, and to engage to cultivate indigo, Gopi encouraging him with the assurance "that ashes have fallen upon his ready-made rice;" that the "Yama (Death, the King of Terror) of Indigo has attacked him, and that he has no safety."

In the next scene, which is laid in "Goluk Chunder Basu's hall," we are introduced to Sabitri, wife of Goluk Chunder, Soirindri, wife of Nobin, Saralota, wife of Bindu Madhab, and Reboti, wife of Sadhu Churn. These ladies are all models of virtue and innocence, but all apparently yield the palm to Khetromani, who joins them, and whose modesty is such that she is found to have cut off the curls of her beautiful hair, because she had heard that such adornments were becoming only to ladies either of rich family or loose character. In the course of conversation it becomes apparent that the designs of Amin upon the young lady are beginning to develop. A woman named Podi Moyrani, a sweetmeat-seller, noted for her intrigues, has been to Sadhu's house that day, and Reboti, Sadhu's wife, declares that the woman has told her "that the young Sahib has become mad, as it were, at seeing Khetromani, and wants to see her in the factory." Aduri, a maid-servant in the house, overhears the statement. Her manners have not, apparently, that repose which stamps the caste of her mistress. She is at once suspicious; and doesn't care who knows it; but the metaphorical manner in which she expresses her feelings would be considered rather strong on the British stage:

Aduri. Fie! fie! fie! bad smell of the onion! Can we go to the Sahib? Fie! fie! bad smell of the onion! I shall never be out any more alone. I can bear every other thing, but the smell of the onion I never could bear. Fie! fie! bad smell of the onion!

It appears that the agent of the Sahib has said that if Khetromani refuses to go to the house, she will be brought away by force. Reboti says that it is easy for the planter to carry her away, as no ryot's wife is safe from him; the planters, one of the other ladies says, are not Sahibs, but they are the dregs (*chandul*) of Sahibs. They then go on to say that the planters get the magistrate to throw anybody who offends them into prison, and here the feminine

nature breaks out into scandal. Reboti says that "the wife of the planter, in order to make her husband's case strong (*pucca*), sent a letter to the magistrate, since it is said that the magistrate hears her words most attentively." To this Aduri, the waiting-maid, whose want of repose in manner has been already noticed, adds a frank statement of her own experience. She says: "I saw the lady; she has no shame at all. When the magistrate of the Zillah (whose name occasions great terror) goes riding about through the village, the lady also rides on horseback with him."

The scene concludes with the elder lady telling the two younger to go to the ghât together, while the evening light continues, and wash themselves; a desirable process, doubtless, for, throughout the act, there are several allusions to the fact that none of the characters—owing to the hurried action of the drama—have had time to perform their ablutions during the day.

The second act begins with a scene at the godown (cellar) of Begunbari Factory. Torapa and four other ryots are discovered sitting and abusing the planters. One says that they have nothing for it but to submit. "*Before sticks there can be no words.*" This, like several other sentences which we have marked in italics, is an aphorism in common use, and must not be understood as arising from the ready wit of the ryot. Another says that they must assert themselves: "*By speaking the truth we shall ride on horseback.*" The planters, he says, always get a good magistrate removed as soon as they can. In a district of which they are speaking, he says that the planters prepared a dinner for the magistrate, in order to get him into their power; but he *concealed himself like a stolen cow*, and would not go. He was a person of good family. Why should he go to the dinner? The planters are the low people of Belata, or England. Yet a former governor allowed himself to be feasted at the factories, like a bridegroom before the celebration of his marriage. Some of their number have composed some verses, which are quoted in the course of conversation. One is:

The man with eyes like those of the cat, is an ignorant fool:
So the indigo of the indigo factory is an instrument of punishment.

We must confess that we do not see the bearing of the above. As a late facetious judge remarked of another judge, who had been "trying" a joke: "His lordship has reserved the point." Another quotation is more comprehensible:

The missionaries have destroyed the caste;
The factory-monkeys have destroyed the rice.

The conference is disturbed by the entrance of Gopi Churn, the Dewan, with Mr. Rose, a planter, carrying his *ramkanta*: an instrument much resembling *shamchand*. The ryots are all beaten and kicked, and one of them falls in a position described in the stage direction as "*upside down on the ground.*"

The scene then changes to "the bedroom of Bindu Madhab," whose wife is discovered reading a letter from her husband, who tells her of an accusation brought against his father by the planters. He intimates that he believes in the ultimate triumph of justice, because he is taught so by the works that he has studied. "My dear," he says, "I have not forgotten the Bengalee translation of Shakespeare; it cannot be got now in the shops; but one of my friends, Bonkima by name, has given me one copy. When I come home I will bring it with me. My dear, what a great source of pleasure is the acquisition of learning!" The liberality of Bonkima appears to touch the heart of Saralota, but, like a true woman, she is sufficiently self-possessed for the duties of the toilette; for, upon the entrance of Aduri (the waiting maid with the keen sense of the onion of treachery), she suggests to that damsel, "Let us now rub ourselves with oil in the cook-room." The scene then closes with "*exit both*" (in Bengalee Latin) for that purpose.

The next scene is mystically described as "A road, pointing three ways," the kind of road, we suppose, that would be taken by the celebrated oyster which required a similar number of persons to swallow him whole. The woman Podi Moyrani is found indulging in a repentant soliloquy on account of the part she has been taking in placing the fair Khetromani in the power of the English Sahib. A cowherd comes and taunts her with having gone into the indigo business; but he is soon driven off by the lattial (club-man) of the factory, who makes love to her. But still her conscience pursues her, and makes her unpleasantly sensitive to railery—a talent which the Hindoos have always greatly at their command. The lattial gone, four native boys come dancing round her, clapping their hands, and singing the following chant, which is Shakespearean in its simple force:

My dear Moyrani, where is your indigo?

My dear Moyrani, where is your indigo?

My dear Moyrani, where is your indigo?

Human nature can endure the shame no longer. The guilty woman flies from the face of her fellow-countrymen—behind the scenes.

The third act commences with a scene at the factory between Mr. Wood and Gopi, his Dewan, in which we gather that Nobin is ruined, his land taken away from him, and that he has been twice in court. The planter discourses about his schemes in general, and of a native who writes against him in the newspapers. Gopi consoles him by saying, "Their papers can never stand before yours—can by no means bear a comparison; and, moreover, they are as the earthen bottles for cooling water, compared with the jars of Dacca. But to bring the newspapers within your influence great expense has been incurred." That takes place according to time; as is said,

According to circumstances the friend becomes the enemy:

The lame ass is sold at the price of the horse.

There are more direct allusions in the course of the piece to the alleged corruption of some of the local journals.

The next scene (the bedroom of Nobin Madhab) is mainly occupied by a consultation among the family as to the measures to be taken in consequence of Khetromani having been carried off. Reboti calls aloud for her daughter. "Bring me Khetromani! bring me my puppet of gold!" Nobin, after a great deal of talk, prepares for action. "The indigo frog," he declares, "can never sit on the white water-lily-like constancy of a woman!" "The jewel," as one of the ladies says, with less grace, perhaps, but more force, "must be taken from the indigo-monkey," at any hazard.

In the scene which follows, the interest of the piece is worked up to the highest pitch. Mr. Rose is sitting in his chamber, and the woman Podi Moyrani brings the fair Khetromani to him. Khetromani remonstrates with Podi for the part she has taken, but Podi says, "You must speak to the Sahib; to speak to me, is like crying in the wilderness." The planter makes some unfeeling remarks; but he is interrupted by Nobin and another ryot breaking into the room. They rescue Khetromani, and treat the planter with some roughness: Nobin, however, restraining his friend with beautiful hypocrisy by saying, "We ought not to be cruel because they are so." Then there comes a change to the "Hall in the house of Goluk." Sabitri, his wife, is lamenting that her husband has been summoned to the court. But with her bous (daughters-in-law) she seeks the old consolation of the toilette, and one of the stage directions in the scene is, "Saralota rubs the oil on her mother-in-law's body"—a precaution, by the way, much practised in the East before bathing, for the somewhat curious reason that it prevents the water from touching the skin.

The next scene is laid in the magistrate's court. Mr. Wood, the plaintiff, sits and talks with the magistrate, who asks his advice upon several points. Goluk is sentenced to pay two hundred rupees, or find sureties to that amount, binding him to plant indigo. In the course of the trial the magistrate writes a note to Mrs. Wood, the wife of the plaintiff, and despatches it by one of the court messengers, sending a message also to Mr. Wood's head butler, to say that his master will not be home to dinner. The magistrate and the plaintiff then leave the court together.

We are next introduced to the dwelling of Bindu Madhab, where Nobin Bindu and Sadhu are discovered, talking of Goluk, their father, who is now imprisoned by order of the magistrate, "the slave of the indigo-planters;" they also mention the "deadly sorrow" of Khetromani. All adjourn to the jail, where, on the scene changing, the dead body of Goluk is seen hanging by his outer garment, twisted like a rope. He has died by his own hand. Until the doctor arrives, the policeman says he cannot cut the body down. As for the magistrate, he was not to be there for four days. "At Sachigunge, on Saturday, they have a

champagne party, and ladies dance. Mrs. Wood can never dance with any other but our Sahib (the magistrate); that I saw, when I was a hearer. Mrs. Wood is very kind; through the influence of one letter she got me the jemetary of the jail."

In the fifth and last act there occurs in the first scene a conversation between Mr. Wood and his Dewan upon the subject of a disturbance among the ryots. The Dewan ventures to speak a little candidly, for which he gets knocked down and kicked, and called "a diabolical nigger." In the next scene, which is "The Bedroom of Nobin," that unfortunate ryot is brought in senseless, with a fractured skull, which he has received from the Sahib at the factory. Both he and his friend Torapa had made a brave resistance, but had been overpowered; but not before Torapa had made a rush at the elder Sahib (Wood) and bitten off his nose! "That nose I have kept with me," adds Torapa, in telling the story, "and when the baboo (Nobin) will rise up to life again I will show him that." (*Here he produces the nose.*) "Had the baboo been able to fly off himself, I would have taken his (Wood's) ears; but I would not have killed him, as he is a creature of God." After this, all the ladies of the drama, and the entire female population of the neighbourhood, enter. Sabitri falls senseless at finding her son on the point of death; but Soirindri commands herself sufficiently to "sit near his mouth." Looking at Sabitri, she says, "As the cow losing her young wanders about with loud cries, then being bit by a serpent falls down dead on the field, so the mother is lying dead on the ground, being grieved for her dear son." After this, she herself falls upon the breast of Nobin. Nobin's aunt tries to raise her from the ground, but fails, and falls also near her. Sabitri next goes mad, and talks wildly. A physician is afterwards brought to try and revive Nobin.

The following scene is laid in the "Room of the Sadhu Churn." Khetromani lies in great torment on her bed; Sadhu and Reboti are with her. The physician does all in his power, but she dies amidst the loud cries and lamentations of her family. Then comes the last scene, the "Hall in the house of Goluk," where Sabitri, still insane, is found sitting with the dead body of Nobin on her lap. She is performing some wild incantations, which are interrupted by Saralota, her daughter-in-law, whom she seizes in a frenzy and strangles—standing afterwards on her neck. Bindu Madhab, the husband of Saralota, enters during this proceeding. Bindu says that he cannot live now that his father is hanged, that his brother Nobin has died of his wounds, and that his mother has destroyed his wife. Upon hearing this, Sabitri suddenly recovers her understanding, and aroused to a sense of the crime she has committed, herself drops down dead. Her son kneels and weeps beside the body, taking some of the dust from her feet and placing it on his head, eating also some of the same dust, "to purify his body." Next appears Soirindri, who says that she is going to

die with her husband Nobin, and will not be prevented. She runs out. Bindu makes a funeral oration upon the family, which he says "has been destroyed by indigo, the great destroyer of honour." The curtain falls, leaving him sitting, clasping his mother's feet.

Such is the drama of Nil Darpan—as far as its most essential features are concerned. Considering that it pretends to be a true picture of the indigo-planting system, it would certainly warrant an investigation of the nature of that system on the part of government, were it not for the fact that the investigation was made last year, and that all the charges here so pathetically illustrated were found to be false. As a political squib, therefore, it comes rather late in the day. As a dramatic production, it may be sufficient to remark that it is about twice as long as *Macbeth*.

A NEW DISEASE?

DURING a journey in Brittany, Monsieur Hardy, Doctor to the Hospital Saint-Louis, Paris, spent several days at Brest; and there, both in civil and medical society, he heard much talk of a singular malady which, for some years past, had affected a certain number of young women resident in that city. The complaint, characterised by a black discoloration of the eyelids, has been very carefully described by its discoverer, M. Leroy de Méricourt, Principal Physician to the Navy, and Professor at the Naval School at Brest. Dr. Hardy was so startled by the peculiarity of this affection, which was only known by hearsay at Paris, that he felt a strong desire to see a case. M. Leroy de Méricourt gratified his wish, by introducing him to one of his patients suffering under black dropsy of the eyelids.

Mademoiselle X., nineteen years of age, of lymphatic temperament and average strength, a tall and handsome girl, in the habitual enjoyment of excellent health, belongs to the middle class of society. One Sunday, two years ago, as she came out of church after mass, something occurred to annoy her excessively. In the evening, observing some black spots upon her eyelids, she feared she was going to have the black disease of which she had already seen instances, and which was the terror of all the girls in Brest. Unfortunately, her apprehensions turned out too true. On the next and the following days, the spots remained and increased, without, however, her general health's showing the least derangement or irregularity. A few very slight and small pimples only made their appearance once or twice, and took their departure as harmless shadows as they came.

On the 17th of September, 1859, the patient was found in the following condition: at the first glance you are struck with the black discoloration which covers the cutaneous surface of the two eyelids; both, and especially the lower lid, are covered with a stratum of slightly greyish black, as if they had been daubed over with some dark dye. On closer inspection, the

black stratum is slightly granulated, and resembles a deposition of coal-dust on the skin. The mucous membrane of the eyelid is slightly injected, but the eyes present nothing remarkable, unless it be a more brilliant aspect, which is certainly due to the colouring of the eyelids. The patient, besides, experiences neither heat nor smarting, nor any other disturbance of the visual organs.

On rubbing the coloured portions rather roughly with a piece of linen dipped in olive oil, the dingy plaster came away, and was found on the linen in the shape of a black spot, exactly the same as would result from wiping an object that had been dirtied by smoke. The eyelids were then clean and of a natural hue, and the skin presented its usual aspect to the naked eye; examined with a lens, the cutaneous surface of the eyelids appeared equally clean, except that a few grains of black dust were found to be still adhering in the folds of the skin, and some were also seen at the root of the eyelashes, where the action of the linen was less direct. The sebaceous follicles were in no way developed, nor their orifices enlarged. After the removal of the colouring matter, the patient experienced a slight smarting in the eyes, which were more sensible to the light, slightly injected, and watery. These phenomena were manifested every time the coloured stratum was removed; they diminish and disappear in proportion as the colouring is reproduced, which takes place in a very short time. According to the patient's observations, in a couple of hours the coloration is completely renewed. This interval, required for the secretion, allowed the patient to remove the black stratum and to walk out for an hour or two without her complaint being unpleasantly apparent.

With the exception of this strange affection, the young lady in question (the niece of the mistress of a ladies' boarding school) had nothing whatever the matter with her. During the two years that the malady had existed, she had employed in vain alkaline lotions, sulphureous lotions, and divers pomades; it obstinately resisted every means of cure; it maintained its ground without diminution or augmentation.

This case will give a sufficient idea of the curious affection which has developed itself in certain persons living at Brest. Within five years seven or eight people have been attacked by it; they are all females, and young females, too. Most of them are in easy circumstances; one is the wife of a captain of a frigate, another is a young nursemaid. Dr. Hardy also noticed, as he was looking in at a café window, that the lady who presided at the counter was affected with the same disease.

The coloration which constitutes the malady is ordinarily black; but two cases occurred in which it was blue. Its extent is more variable; sometimes inconsiderable, it resembles the dye which the women of certain nations apply, to give greater brightness to their eyes; at other times, it extends to the cheeks. M. de Méricourt noticed that, on one of his patients, the

black stratum spread over almost the whole of her countenance when she went out of doors, the colouring matter being dispersed by the wind. As to the black matter itself, on being submitted to chemical analysis and examined by the microscope, it appeared to consist of pigmentary matter, except that the microscope could find no trace of cells.

Dr. Hardy wanted much to discover the seat of this extraordinary secretion. At first sight, he was inclined to believe in a sebaceous flux; but the layer of black contained no greasy particles; it appeared on the part of the face where there are few sebaceous follicles, and did not appear on the nose, where there are plenty and well developed. Is the perspiring apparatus of the skin the seat of the malady, and must the secretion be really considered as a coloured local sweat, according to M. de Méricourt's belief and nomenclature? Dr. Hardy could not explain to his own satisfaction how the sudorific glands could secrete a pigment, nor could he discover how the pigment got out of the glands, supposing it to be there. To his mind, there was something in the case quite unknown and unprecedented.

At all events, the development of this affection in the city of Brest was very singular; the fact of residing there appeared to be of some importance; for hitherto, amongst all the persons attacked, one only was cured, and that after leaving Brest for an inland town. Mental emotions appear to exercise considerable influence in causing the disease. As remedies, the most promising seemed to be local applications of astringent solution of alum, of tannin, or mercurial ointments, which act powerfully on the skin.

Nobody said that M. de Méricourt had not seen what he said he saw; but several incredulous members of the faculty believed that he and others had been made the victims of clever juggling. They wished that those witnesses could say that they had seen the darkness of the eyelids reappear before their eyes, after it had been well wiped away. Naturally, a discussion arose in the Medical Society of the Paris Hospitals, which resulted in the appointment, last June, of a commission to inquire whether there were no means of coming to an understanding with M. de Méricourt, to hold a rigorous inquest (before death) on one of his chromidrosiac patients. There were named members of the commission, Messieurs Béhier (reporter), Guérard, Lallier, Legroux, and H. Roger; Messieurs Dechambre, Associated Member, and Robin, the distinguished microscopist, participate in the committee's labours. The summary of their result is this:

The affection to which M. le Docteur Leroy de Méricourt has given the name of chromidrose—it would be more correctly spelt chromhidrosis—is more specially observed in the vicinity of the sea. More frequent with women, it has still been seen in men. With one male patient, it occurred on the back of the hand instead of on the lower eyelids, and always made its appear-

ance during the night, going away at eleven in the forenoon. The age of this subject was forty-seven, whereas that of the ladies ranged from sixteen to thirty-two. The very precise statements that have been put forth respecting the existence of this disease have excited great incredulity and provoked the strongest denials of the fact. The duty of the committee was to obtain complete information respecting the subject in dispute.

It had nothing to do with the interpretation of a fact whose existence is clearly demonstrated; nor had it to inquire what interest such and such persons could have or not have in their eyelids being usually stained with black, nor to pronounce an opinion respecting the morality of those persons. In science, those arguments are absolutely devoid of value. The numerous examples to be observed every day in the hospitals, and even in the world, edify medical men touching the hankering after importance and effect, which often leads to the strangest simulations and the most gratuitous frauds, and which also sometimes end in betraying interested motives unknown and even unsuspected at the outset. The committee's task was simply to ascertain the reality or the falsity of a fact; but the investigation of this simple material fact was not without its difficulty.

At half-past three in the afternoon of the 29th of June, 1861, the committee paid a visit to Madame Z., who had been sent from Brest by M. de Méricourt, as offering an authentic case of chromidrosis. The meeting took place by appointment, the day before, at the house of M. Henri Roger, secretary-general to the society. On the first occasion of the lady's presenting herself, there was a very decided coloration of both the lower eyelids, which, at her second appearance, was considerably darker; a circumstance explained by herself and her husband as occasioned by the receipt of a letter which had greatly agitated her nervous system. It was stated that no washing or wiping of any kind had been applied to the eyes since their departure from Brest.

Madame Z. is twenty-three, of a nervous temperament, with chesnut hair, light hazel eyes, and eyebrows darker than her hair. Up to the time of her marriage, she enjoyed excellent and regular health, with the exception of frequent but incomplete fainting-fits. Her appetite was good, and even hearty. After supper, she often felt oppression of the chest, with redness of the face. The first discoloration of the eyelids appeared before the birth of a child, still living, after which, it disappeared, to return and remain more or less permanently. The development of the black stain, she said, is always accompanied by weakness of sight and increased general susceptibility. Lively emotions develop the phenomenon more rapidly; and, during the periods of its existence, if the coloration is effaced, it takes to reproduce it a space of time varying from one to four hours, sometimes less and rarely more. According to

the statement of Madame Z. and her husband, nothing can be more irregular than the interval between these returns of the blackness, or than the circumstances which tend to induce them. Madame Z. confessed that, to keep the skin of her face in good condition, she habitually made use of a composition called Anti-epheleic Milk, or Water.

At the moment of examination, the lower eyelids were the seat of a very intensely black coloration, slightly granular in its appearance at several spots, and with a dull instead of a shining surface, giving anything but the idea of a liquid or an oily stratum. The colour was still darker close to the lower eyelashes, as well as in the furrow which separates the lower eyelid from the cheek. Here, however, the colouring abruptly ceased, although by a narrow very gradual shading off. This singular regularity of form accorded ill with the idea of a secretion—a function which is generally less mathematically circumscribed. At the outer and inner corners of the eyes, as well as on the lashes of the upper lids, there were little lumps of colouring matter, which seemed to result from the union of smaller grains collected and grouped together, either spontaneously or in consequence of opening and shutting the eyelids—movements which were repeated by the lady both very frequently and very forcibly.

On examining these surfaces with a lens magnifying four or five diameters, they were found to be covered with a black stratum, the grains composing which were not imbedded in the substance of the skin, as if they were issuing from glandular orifices, but were placed and deposited on the surface, to which they adhered with considerable firmness. The down of the skin was in no way stained by the black matter, which was found to stick as firmly to linen as it did to the skin.

The committee next endeavoured to remove the whole of the colouring matter found upon the lower left eyelid, both for the purpose of studying its nature, and to observe whether, and how (if at all) the black coloration was spontaneously reproduced. As water, according to Madame Z., removed the stain with difficulty, a brush dipped in glycerine was passed over the lower eyelid; and by means of a slight scraping performed with a small gold ear-pick, the colouring matter was collected on a slip of glass in sufficient quantity for future examination. The rest was taken away, as completely as possible, with the help of a fine linen rag. To refresh Madame Z., a little fatigued with these operations, the eyelid was carefully washed with cold water, after which it presented an extremely natural and healthy hue, without even a shade of the brownish tinge which is observed on the lower eyelids of certain persons.

The black matter, submitted to the microscope, presented an amorphous, granular, fragmentary, opaque appearance, of a black hue, without any appreciable blue reflexions, and without any seizable trace of organisation. M. Gubler, after a profound microscopical and chemical investi-

gation, pronounced the blacks taken from Madame Z.'s eyelids to consist essentially of carbon in a state of liberty. To confirm his opinion, he compared the substance obtained from the chromidrosiac lady with carbon prepared artificially. Profound differences distinguish it from ordinary charcoal as well as from carbonised cork; but he declares that he is unable to distinguish it from the black of smoke (lamp-black) prepared by himself, by receiving the flame of a waxlight on a square of glass, especially when he took care to select the lamp-black from the middle of the spot. The colour obtained from the cutaneous surface of the eyelids in the present case of chromidrosis, differs considerably from animal or vegetable blues, and even from the black pigments of the human economy: it only approaches the carbonaceous matter of the lungs.

At half-past four, the eyelid was clean, and Madame Z. became the object of the strictest surveillance. Surrounded by the members of the committee, with whom she never ceased to converse in the most amiable manner, she was never lost sight of for a single instant. If one gentleman left the saloon, he gave previous notice to the others, but upon the whole all were present. At a quarter to six, no black had reappeared, and an appointment was made with the patient for Monday, the 1st of July, at three o'clock, begging her to remove the colouring herself before coming, in order to allow a longer time for the reproduction of the stain. Messieurs Roger and Béhier, however, remained to keep the lady company, as her husband had not yet returned from a walk which he took while the examination lasted.

But although the committee retired from the scene of action, the patient was not left an instant alone; their reporter never ceased to watch her attentively whilst M. Roger was accompanying his colleagues to the door. As soon as they had left the room, the patient took from her pocket a handkerchief different to the embroidered one which she held in her hand. Immediately suspecting that she might attempt some deception, now that she was left alone with a solitary companion, the observer strained his attention to the utmost, noticing how she blew her nose, and whether the forefinger of the hand employed were not passed over the lower eyelid, smearing it with some colouring matter; but no, she was innocent of the apprehended legerdemain. She blew her nose twice very naturally, never eclipsing the totality of her face behind her handkerchief, nor ever concealing her interesting left lower eyelid.

These observations were made in a spirit of scrupulous distrust. M. Roger returned; Madame Z. began to appear ill at ease; she had two or three little fits of dry coughing. Spasmodic movements were observed in the face, which reddened sensibly, with similar motions in the arms, and winkings of the eyes, or rather very energetic veritable orbicular contractions, repeated very frequently. Perspiration became

abundant, especially on the hands; which afforded a pretext for examining the fingers, to see if they did not betray the presence of colouring matter. There was nothing, nor on the supplemental handkerchief, which the lady let drop and the gentlemen picked up with a show of politeness and with intense curiosity. At the same time with the perspiration and the flushed face, another phenomenon manifested itself, namely, an abundant secretion of oily appearance, and not at all coloured, which took place at the edge of the eyelids while the violent contractions were going on. At twenty minutes to six no return of coloration.

On Monday, the 1st of July, a second meeting was held, the eyes having been cleaned two hours previously. Madame Z. and her husband stated that, during the evening of Saturday, the black colouring, which had been removed, had returned with great intensity; so much so that Madame Z. had been subjected to unpolite remarks, which gave her husband great pain. It continued very dark the whole of the 30th, and was very black indeed on the first of July. The committee separated at half-past six, after waiting three hours for nothing; Madame Z. announced, besides, that she felt there would probably be no return of colouring; nor was anything apparent at half-past ten at night, nor on the following Tuesday up to five in the afternoon. The results remained absolutely negative. The lady and her spouse took leave of the committee, saying that they were obliged to return to Brest next morning; they remained, nevertheless, in Paris until the evening of the 8th.

The committee felt themselves sufficiently enlightened. Their reporter had the wickedness to make inquiries respecting cosmetics likely to produce analogous effects. He found three articles of fashionable perfumery employed to blacken points which coquetry wishes to bring out into relief. A paste retailed in boxes, with the addition of a little brush and a little stump, sometimes as *Indian Pigment*, sometimes as *Henné of Sennaar*, intended to blacken the hair, the eyebrows, the whiskers, the moustaches, the edge of the eyelids, and differing sensibly from oily cosmetics. Then there is a preparation in the form of pencils, contained in an ivory case, and known by the name of *Mysterious Pencils*. This is more tenacious, and the pencil must be heated for application. It probably contains wax; its application is more difficult. Thirdly, there is a very fine black powdery substance, sold in little ivory cases accompanied by a stick terminating at one end in a little stump, which is sold as *Kohénil* or *Pyrommée*; its destination is to blacken the eyelashes and the edge of the eyelids, in order to render "the glances more provoking," as the wrapper emphatically says. The reporter, M. Béhier, irreverently applied all these substances to his own lower eyelids, whistling all the while the air "What a beauty I do grow!" and he succeeded in producing a capital imitation of chromidrosis. He also sophisticated the eyes of a young man, his

neighbour, and so presented him to the committee; the committee, with their lenses and microscopes, could see no difference between the young man's case and Madame Z.'s. Chemical tests had the same result; there was a complete similitude of characters. If you put a good dose of koheuil into your eye, and then writhe and twist yourself until you perspire, and wink, and give your face convulsive twitches, you will shortly exhibit a beautiful instance of chromidrosis. If the reader doubt, a single trial will convince him of the excellence of the preparation.

To complete the case, it only remained to discover under what common form this colouring matter was employed in the recipes of these diverse cosmetics. The task was not easy; it was, in fact, the fathoming of a deep secret. Fortunately, M. Béhier had friendly relations with the proprietor of one of the largest manufacturing of perfumery in Paris, the house of Violet, who had the kindness to furnish accurate information as well as the requisite ingredients, believing that he was thereby rendering a service to scientific truth. The supplementary and odiferous substances employed as vehicles constitute the commercial secret, and there is no need to mention them; but nobody's interests will suffer from the announcement that the colouring matter of Indian Pigment, Pyrommée, Koheuil, and Mysterious Pencils, is simply—lamp-black! Chromidrosis, ends, literally, in smoke.

M. Robin ascertained, on one person affected with chromidrosis, the presence of a substance offering a blue coloration. Black pigments are not the only ones prepared by perfumers. Besides China rouge and the different liquid and other paints, Court rouge, Plessis rouge, Rouge de Carthame Hespéridé; besides white of fleurs-de-lys, fleurs-de-lys water, pearl-white achromatised or chromatised, straw-coloured, rose, and demi-rose; besides carnation and carmine pomade, employed to give to the lips of these painted faces the vivacity of a coral tint; there is also fabricated a composition to imitate the veins on the skin, which is sold under the name of *Azure Network*. Indigo is the foundation of these false veins; and M. Robin might find indigo on his patients' eyelids without the occurrence of a miracle.

It has happened that the same, or about the same, scientific discoveries and inventions have been made at about the same time by different persons in different places; such likewise has been the case with the fair inventors of chromidrosis. It is a disputed honour who was the first to appear with a face like a half-washed chimney-sweep. Some years ago, Dr. Spring, Professor at the University of Liege, was consulted respecting the daughter of a high functionary, who presented the most magnificent example of chromidrosis you could wish to see. On each side of her face she had a large black spot extending from her cheek bones to

her eyes. She was fifteen years of age, had been carefully brought up, had never been ill, and had never had anything to vex her in her life. She had nothing to excite her imagination, and had never heard speak of chromidrosis. Still, as her epitaph might one day say, "Chromidrosis sore long time she bore; Physicians were in vain." They formed the most ingenious theories, and left the patient's cheeks indelibly sable.

Dr. Spring commenced his treatment of the inky lady by the application of a large dose of incredulity. He found that the substance exuded and secreted was *graphite*, or black-lead, the same which brightens our stoves and makes our pencils mark. How could a pretty girl contrive to produce a mineral? How, indeed? To discover whether the black was really a secretion, the doctor one evening cleaned her eyelids and cheeks; and under the pretence of applying a remedy which *must* prove infallible, he coated them with a stratum of collodion. Next morning, the eyes were as black as ever, only the pigment was found outside and upon the collodion, and not between the collodion and the skin. No secretion, therefore, but outward application! Where the damsel hid her store of black-lead, and how she applied it, mattered little to the doctor, thus convinced that its source did not lie below the epidermis. He advised the parents to travel with their daughter, to take her to pleasant watering-places, and to change the air and the scene entirely. Since then, the fair one has had no more graphite patches on her face.

And yet some people like to believe a thing *because* it is absurd. M. de Méricourt and a few staunch followers are still convinced that there is such a disease as chromidrosis!

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